

ON THE BEACH By Harrison Rhodes

NOVEMBER 1904

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THE RED BOOK



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THE RED BOOK

EDITED BY TRUMBULL WHITE

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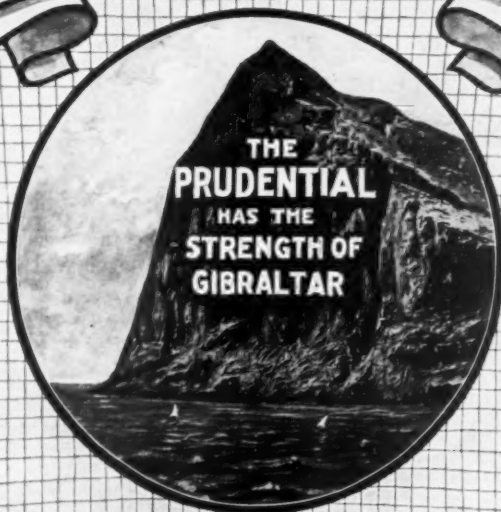
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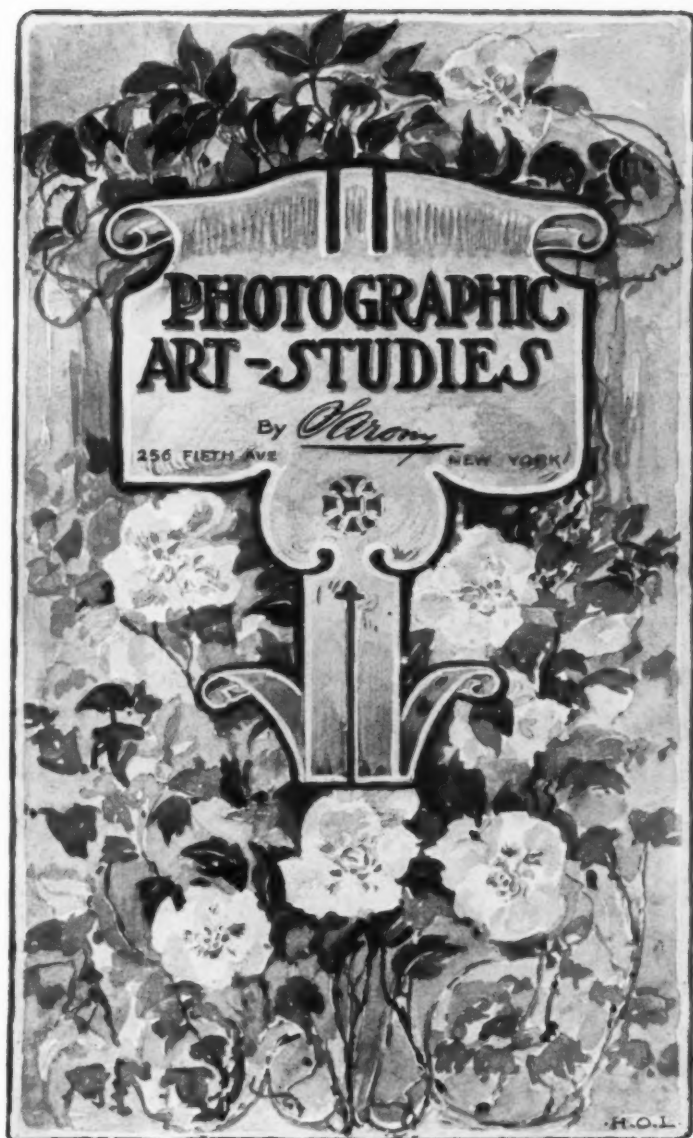
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DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

““Are you happy?” he asked, with a kind of catch in his voice.”

“On the Beach;” see page 30

THE RED BOOK

Vol. IV

November, 1904

No. 1

On the Beach

BY HARRISON RHODES

To the left the beach ran straight as far as the eye could reach, until the gray of its broad sands, the white foam of the surf, and the dull green of wiregrass and palmetto scrub, hardy adventurers from the dunes behind, all seemed to mingle in a misty distance shining in the blazing sun. The tide was low, and a broad path, a smooth pavement of close-packed sands, untracked by any passer-by, and only broken towards the edge by a fringe of shells and seaweed, led backward to the north, to towns and ships and railways, part of the little strip men know between the Everglades behind and the rolling Atlantic before.

To the north was the world, yet the beach dipped beneath the horizon and there was no sign of man. Southward in a long curve the land pushed out to sea, and there, in the same silvery mist where sand and wave met, rose the slender tower of the lighthouse at the Inlet, perhaps ten miles away. Behind this, on the lagoon, there was a small settlement, then beyond, the lonely beach again, stretching gradually westward towards the Gulf, and finally breaking into a myriad of low-lying islands, a tropic archipelago whose shores are best known to turtles that turn back each year from the blue waters of mid-ocean, and speed straight across the intervening thousand miles to lay their eggs upon

familiar sands beneath the summer moon. A barren and deserted land, yet having always something of the old magic that the name of Florida has held ever since the great Spanish adventurer came from the shores of Cuba, seeking its enchantments.

Here for the most part of the time the only living things one might see would be a lonely fish-hawk hovering above the surf, or a flock of silly pelicans flying in a long line near the waves. Yet here it is that one must come to gather and to fit together the fragments of the story of Lady Mary Hartley. She is dead now, and her child. There is no trace of the man who called himself Archibald Lennox, though some people at Tomocala maintain that the young Frenchman at Harper's Grove named d'Hauteville, who was his best friend, still hears from him, and there is a story that after she died he went back with Big Jim Sladen, the half-breed, to the Seminole village, which they say there is on an island surrounded by a clear lake, in the wilderness of saw-grass west of the ruins of Sam Jones' Old Town. But the story is being forgotten on the East Coast, and it is no stranger than a hundred others in that land where derelicts come to shore and where so many lost hopes lie buried.

In Park Lane or in Grosvenor

Square one may still hear them talk of Mary Hartley, and there are a hundred stories, each one madder and more fantastic than the others, and not a one so simple as the truth. But London was far away, and its imagination was touched. Besides, London had known the girl in the days of her pride, and few on the East Coast even saw her.

She had been an orphan, and without a penny, yet even before she came out she was a success, and was talked about as a girl is perhaps once in a decade in London. That she would be a personage in society there could be no doubt, since the old Duchess of Portrenwick, who was only a distant kinswoman of the Hartleys and had not bothered about a girl for years, was to bring her out. That she was beautiful, no one could doubt who remembered her mother, or had chanced to be present on the rare occasions when the girl herself came to town and rode in the early morning down the Row. That she would be brilliant and perhaps eccentric, was guaranteed by the fact that she was being brought up in the country by a somewhat unusual character, Mrs. Delafield, a cousin of the Hartleys, who at fifty-five wore herself to a bone following the hardest hunt in the Midlands, and recovered from these exertions by a brisk correspondence with savants in Paris, Berlin and Vienna touching the correct text of little-known Persian poets. Indeed, romance and adventure were in Lady Mary's blood. Her mother, from whom she got her violet eyes and her thick masses of almost purplish black hair, had come from the west of Ireland, near Galway, where Spanish blood has been mixed with that of the Celt, and on the extensive chart of her father's family tree it gave Lady Mary great pleasure to contemplate

the faded greenish circle on which was inscribed the name of the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

To introduce the girl, the old Duchess opened Antrim House for the first time in years for more than a dinner party of eight. People had almost forgotten the Green Ball Room, and until that night when they saw the frail old lady almost stagger beneath their weight, there had been those who declared that the Portrenwick pearls had long ago been sold secretly in Paris. The ball revived the old traditions of exclusiveness, and, till the middle of July, at least, that year, the millionaires of America and the Antipodes were received with some reserve. London, through the glowing nights of the season, poured out its treasures at the feet of its new idol. Lady Mary was all that had been promised, and more; for the indefinable quality of charm was what no one had quite described, and for this London did its best to spoil her. For this it forgave, in her, mad escapades which it would never have pardoned in a woman who engaged upon them with anything short of Lady Mary's perfect openness and air of being forgiven in advance.

There was little harm in the adventures—they were of a piece with that ride to Richmond in the dawn after a ball at Devonshire House, when Lady Mary, Mrs. Malhuston of Sedgwickstown, Lord Ecclestour, and a certain Crown Prince breakfasted heavily off eggs and bacon and grilled kidneys on the terrace of the Star and Garter, while agitated officials at Charing Cross Station paced frantically up and down the red-carpeted platform by the special train which had been chartered to convey His Royal Highness to Dover, and frightened equerries scoured the town for



DRAW. BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

“Lady Mary was all that had been promised, and more.”

delinquent royalty. It may have been that this episode, which was never especially a secret, gave rise to the later stories of stormy scenes between the young Prince and his father, when the former was said to have urged the heretical doctrine that the blood of England's noblest families was as good as his own, and better than that of a certain plump and yellow-haired German Princess with whom political rumors were

already uniting him. The truth of all this will never be known. When they used to question Lady Mary about it she was non-committal, and she laughed. She said at least she did not think his heart was broken. But then she never seemed to think their hearts were broken, in spite of the many languishing and disappointed suitors who maintained the contrary.

For two years Lady Mary went

her laughing and triumphant way. She took the best that London had to offer, found it good, and gave gratitude; but never found it good enough, so they used to say. While her heart was free she never would, was the common judgment; and that when love came it should bring her happiness, was the wish of almost every one. Yet when at last it did come it seemed as if fate had willed it as the one flaw in a brilliant career.

Most women of any importance in London for ten years had had their moment of fancying themselves mildly in love with Henry Vincent; and, broadly speaking, one may say that he had never doubted that each and every one of them had set her heart on him. He was an amiable and worthless six feet of almost perfect good looks, partly envied and partly laughed at by other men, admittedly a Don Juan, yet somehow lacking the fire and wickedness of his prototype. His wife's attitude was modern, even among the most modern. She was a beauty of a somewhat scraggy order, and high in favor in the most exalted circles. She always said that her marriage was of the most satisfactory description, and the only kind she could have endured. But she commented sometimes upon her husband's entanglements, in a manner kindly though detached, and, giving all her sympathy to the women, murmured in a voice pitched lower than usual that "Henry really ought not to behave so." In this mild spirit she took notice of "poor, dear Lady Mary."

Lady Mary's infatuation with Vincent—it was commonly called that—was in a manner public property, as indeed anything concerning the young woman was apt to be. Despising criticism, she frankly offered herself for it, something in

the grand manner of a royal personage, so her few enemies remarked. And the oddest thing about the whole affair was that in all discussions of it—and for a year it must have been talked of for at least the length of one course at every fashionable dinner—it was never called a scandal. The world was as sure of Mary Hartley's conduct as she was herself, and more than this cannot be said to place it beyond reproach. There was little probability that Vincent would ever find himself free to marry her, and scandal being eliminated from the discussion, it reduced itself to wonder at the infatuation—no better word was ever found, and it is possible the girl herself could have found no other.

The founts of affection cannot always be charted, but certain keen observers asserted that Lady Mary's maternal instincts were a good half of her feelings towards Vincent. Certainly of all the women he had known she was the only one who had in the least pulled him out of the rut of his amiable worthlessness. No one understood, or will ever understand, just what he and she had planned for the future. But suddenly, to London's astonishment, he accepted a government appointment which took him into Northwest Canada near the Alaskan border. He went there in March, and in September the news of his death reached England, a respectable death met while quelling a disturbance between the half-breed inhabitants of the district and some Italian laborers who had been brought north from the United States to work on the new railway.

Since no one is in London in September, it is not a month in which public attention can easily be focused upon any one person, but so far as the process was to be

managed, interest concentrated upon Lady Mary rather than upon the bereaved Agatha Vincent. Not much was discovered, for the former suddenly went abroad with Mrs. Malhuston of Sedgwickstown, the gay companion of so many an escapade. They were seen once, or at least it was said they had been seen, in a little watering-place halfway between Vienna and Trieste, at the tag end of its season. Lady Mary was dressed in the deepest mourning. The end of November she came back, to stay with the old Duchess in the country, and just before Christmas she announced her engagement to the Marquis of Queenshire, a nobleman little seen of late in England, but known as an elderly man of extreme distinction and enormous wealth. The credit of the Hartley name, which had no doubt declined a little through the Vincent period, was now refurbished and resplendent. London waited to turn the page and begin a chapter in which a Marchioness of Queenshire should eclipse even the triumphs of her earlier days. But Lady Mary appeared but once in town, for the briefest period of gloomy splendor. The wedding was fixed for July, and meanwhile Lord Queenshire, with his sister Lady Exton, Mrs. Malhuston, Lady Mary and the two Brownrigg men (excellent shots and good fishermen, who count for nothing in this tale), crossed the Atlantic, and, chartering a yacht at Palm Beach, started to cruise down the East Florida coast, with the intention of ultimately crossing to the Bahamas and finishing at Nassau, where a cousin of Lord Queenshire's was Governor.

One day is very like another on the Florida beach, when once the winter storms are over and a lazy

summer sea is sending its long green rollers upon the smooth stretch of sands. Porpoises chasing mullet, and fish-hawks poised above the surf, may note the changes in the tides, but day after day might pass and no human creature go that way. Here one afternoon, to the seaward end of a half-overgrown trail leading across from the deserted house on the river north of Tomocala, Lady Mary wandered. The night before a rumor of wild turkeys to be found in the flatwoods beyond Tomocala Creek had come to the yacht, and after breakfast the rest of the party had gone in their pursuit. The morning she had spent "crabbing" from the rickety dock where the *Shushu* lay, and after eating heartily of her catch for lunch, had strolled across the trail to the sea.

She came upon the sands at a moment when their loneliness was the scene of a tragedy. A little to the south, at the very edge of the small advance guards of the rising tide, she caught sight of a spot of gleaming white and thought she saw the weak flutter of gray wings. A fish-hawk either sick or wounded lay there, struggling despairingly to escape the floods that would soon pour over it. Protecting her hands against its angry bill, the girl carried the bird back beyond reach of the tide and established it in the shade of a scrub palmetto in a little hollow in the sands. A short way back along the trail she remembered seeing a pool left from last night's shower, and she fetched a shell full of clear water, watched the bird drink, and wondered what more she could do. No one aboard the yacht was likely to know better than herself, so she decided to wait till sundown and carry her charge back to the returning sportsmen. Perhaps only its wings were broken. Well,

broken wings did not always kill, she knew.

An hour or more Lady Mary sat upon the sands, gazing with heavy-lidded eyes across the waters that stretch east towards Africa, and perhaps thinking of her life. Perhaps nature wrung some confidences from her pride that no human sympathy could claim. Or perhaps sand and wave and the east wind seemed to hint insistently at something new that life could offer; seemed to promise a draught that is not in the cup the world holds out; seemed to argue softly that for better or for worse the unknown was more than worth the known. London was like a squeezed orange. But her heart cried out for romance, for adventure, yes, for love. Was it wisdom or folly to write "the end" when one was twenty-five, to swear it before a priest, at an altar, in a church?

It must have been between three and four that Lady Mary fell asleep. When she awoke the beach was drowsy still, and even the fish-hawk had closed its beady, eager eyes. But a little distance down the sands she saw an intruder upon their solitude, a bare-footed man with a broad straw hat which made an umbrella-like shelter for his head, splashing along through the shallow water at the edge of the tide, carrying a spade and a basket such as clam-gatherers use. She thought it might be useful to ask his advice about the bird. As he came opposite her he caught the gleam of her white dress behind the sand dune, and stopped in surprise. Beneath the shelter of his hat Lady Mary saw a face bronzed to the fine light tone that only a fair skin will take when once it has learned to resist the torrid heat, and an escaping lock or two of yellow hair, its color deepened as if regilt by

a southern sun. A viking marooned within the tropics might have come to look like this, thought Lady Mary, as, in response to her call, the stranger turned and came to her across the sands.

An hour later the sunlight fell more slantingly across the expanse of the turning tide. Lady Mary still sat in the shelter of the dune, and in the sands at her feet lay the clam-digger. The fish-hawk, examined by deft and gentle hands, had been left to the powerful healing of the sun and the sea breeze, and now, resting its head near its shell of clear water, closed its eyes as if to sleep again. Meanwhile, the stranger, talking with ease, and in the speech that betrayed him, tattered beach-comber though he might appear, as one of her own race, even of her own restricted aristocratic class, told Lady Mary some of the strange tales of the East Coast, and rambling on in desultory fashion, seemed to make the long, low line of sands the very country of Romance. Her imagination was touched as he spoke of St. Augustine, and the shabby gentility of its few proud and decaying Spanish families; of the old man who had been in the China seas and now lived near the Mosquito Inlet in what they called the "pirate's house," where, in a room where the pigs ran in and out, there was a wonderful pagoda of green jade and gold; of the scattered descendants of the unhappy Minorcans, brought from their Mediterranean island in the eighteenth century to dig the trenches for indigo which can still be seen in the deserted hammock-lands back of New Smyrna. Since the earliest days the shifting currents of life have cast upon the Florida shores human driftwood and wreckage from



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

“There was little harm in the adventures.” See page 22

every quarter of the globe. At Tomocala itself they were on one edge of the eternal mystery of the Everglades, with their curious and persistent tales of strange settlements within the wilderness of saw-grass, and if one were only to talk of the people who bought canned goods at

Sanford's Emporium, proof was not wanting that the East Coast was a "rum place," to quote the clam digger at Lady Mary's feet.

A little way to the south was a colony of English people, "all the right sort," gone bankrupt when the big freeze killed every orange tree in their groves and left them penniless. They were too poor even to hope to return to England, too poor to live anywhere except in the lazy tropics. Yet even now they clung pathetically to their traditions, to their memories of homes in the green English country, and stately houses in the great gloomy streets of London. They dined on half a can of Chicago corned beef, but they sat down to it in shabby evening dress; and when bridge came in in London, they played it on Tomocala Creek—for a fiftieth of a cent a point, and even then sometimes gave each other I. O. U.'s. And these were people, so the clam-digger said, whose families his companion might have known in England. So far as birth went, Tomocala could well hold its own anywhere. For example, the young Frenchman at Harper's Grove, who was helping put in potatoes where the orange trees had died, was a capital chap and—if one chose to ask—the cousin of a Duke of France.

"And you?" asked Lady Mary, her eyes turned on her companion with a kind of solemn graciousness beneath the purple-black shadow of her hair.

For one instant he seemed to hesitate; then he said quite simply:

"My name is Archibald Lennox Fraser. My uncle is Lord Dreerthorpe. I dare say you know my cousins?"

"Yes," answered Lady Mary—was this beach only a London drawing-room?—"I know Madeline well, and

I flirted for half a season with Gerald."

"There's something still to be said for London then."

At this Lady Mary smiled, but soon her face grew grave. They had come too close to the problems at which she had been staring across the tossing waves of the Atlantic all that afternoon.

"Is there much to be said for London?" she asked. "You should know. You've been away from it—"

"Five years," he interjected.

"Shall you go back?"

"No," was the answer. "I sha'n't ever go back now. When I left it I was glad to leave, but you may imagine I expected I'd get back soon enough, one way or another. I'm a younger son of a younger son—you know how much we're wanted in England. Of course I thought I should make a lot of money. I had something from my mother—well, after the freeze there was one tree of bitter oranges left in my grove, representing my investment of two thousand pounds. So I pretty well couldn't go back."

"Wouldn't your family—?" began Lady Mary, tentatively.

"Perhaps," was the response, given with a smile. "But on the whole I think they would just as soon I didn't. You see, when I left—well, it wasn't anything so very bad, except for me—but I *was* in a kind of scrape."

"They forget scrapes in London. They're too busy to remember, unless it is something very bad."

Somehow there was a faint note of appeal in her voice; one might almost have thought she begged him to put himself straight in her eyes.

"No," he answered, half-unconsciously compelled by her unspoken

wish, "it was nothing very bad. I could go back, only——"

"Ah," broke in the girl, "that's what I want to know. Does London, splendid though it is, call one back? When one has had all this, sea and sand, and days of sun——"

"And nights of moon," put in the man, looking at the east, where a pale promise for the evening floated in a still sunlit sky.

"When one has all this, is it enough?"

"Yes, it's enough. Can you understand? You seem to."

He looked at her with a kind of eager boyishness, and as he began to speak it seemed to the woman by his side as if there dropped from him every suggestion that linked him in her mind with London, or even with the little world of Tomocala. He seemed to her only a strong but gentle creature of the woods and sands. With hands clasped over her knees she sat, listening greedily. The west grew red behind them, the east flushed, and the drenched beach turned purple in the fading light as he told her of his life. She seemed to see the little whitewashed hut set round with orange trees, not yet fruit-bearing, but filling the air with the heavy fragrance of their flowers. She imagined long, sweet, monotonous days in the strawberry beds and the potato patch, and quiet evenings under shelter from the autumn rains, with a few books that one still liked. She went with him up Tomocala Creek, curious and wondering at the tangled vegetation of its banks, seeing the beginnings of the Everglades, and half-frightened as night fell by the hoots of whip-poor-wills. She shot wild turkey in the flat-woods, fragrant with the burnt scent of bracken and pine needles. In a cat-boat she sailed over the open blue of the

lagoon, and sometimes, barefoot, dug for clams upon the beach. London faded from her mind, London of which she was weary and afraid.

"I understand," she murmured at last; "this gives you everything you really want in life."

"Almost everything," he said, looking at her as she sat, her cheeks flushed with the excitement of new thoughts.

"If a woman could ever be free——" she began, and her eyes looked stormy. "Suppose that I wanted to build myself a cabin on Tomocala Creek——"

"What is it binds you to London? A husband, children?"

"No," she answered, "I'm engaged to be married to Lord Queenshire. He's on the yacht back there."

"To old Queenshire?" broke in surprise from the man. "Oh, I beg pardon. I do ask your pardon," he added.

They sat a moment in silence, then Lady Mary spoke.

"And you?"

"There's no one."

"And are you happy?"

"Almost. I can't say more than that."

"Is there—was there any one in England?"

"You couldn't have been out five years ago," he replied, half smiling, "or you would know. You never heard about the troubles of Lord and Lady Carrington, about her unhappiness. Well, that was the time I went away; that was the scrape. I loved her very much. She is dead now."

"And can one forget down here?" Lady Mary demanded, a strange light in her eyes.

"Almost."

"And can one begin afresh?" she asked, insistently.

He looked at her a moment before he spoke. Then, "One could begin afresh," he said.

There was silence again. Lady Mary rose to her feet.

"It's more moonlight than sunlight now," she said. "I must go back along the trail."

The man was still on the sand, almost kneeling by her side. She stood motionless, and in the moonlight he thought he could see her eyes brimming with tears.

"Are you happy?" he asked, with a kind of catch in his voice.

The girl clasped her hands together and trembled as she spoke.

"Oh, I am dying of my memories, of what the world is doing to me now. I don't know why I'm talking to you like this," she went on rapidly. "It's because you came just this afternoon. And because you've learned to forget and to begin afresh. Because the land and sea have taken you back to them, away from all that horror out there. Because you've found happiness and the simple life."

"A book of verses underneath the bough," began the man at her side.

"A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and thou
Beside me singing in the wilderness,
Oh, wilderness were Paradise
enow."

They might have been words of magic. Lady Mary stared at him with great, frightened, questioning eyes. He did not rise from the sands, but he put up his hands and caught both hers.

"Will you stay?" he asked. "I could make you happy."

The girl said nothing. He jumped to his feet and went on with the eager, boyish air she had noted before.

"It's all quite simple. We can leave a note here. They will be sure to send from the yacht to find you; then we can go down the beach, and from the lighthouse I'll row you across to Tomocala. There's a minister there who'll marry us, and you can be at home to-night. It's a long walk, but I've some sandwiches and a flask in my basket. Do come, won't you?"

"My name is Mary Hartley," said the girl. "I was in love with a man who is dead now, but I haven't been able to forget."

"I can make you forget," was the reply.

"Can you? Do you swear you can?" she said, coming nearer to him.

"I swear I can. I can love you."

He took her in his arms and kissed her twice; once, almost reverentially on the brow, and then, like a lover, on her lips. When he released her she was crying.

"But I'm crying for happiness," she said.

"Then you'll come?"

"I'll come."

They found Lady Mary's note at the top of a split stick stuck in the sands near the wounded fish-hawk, with her handkerchief fluttering from it to attract their notice. Five miles down the beach two figures splashed barefoot through the shallows at the edge of the sea, making their way to Tomocala light in the kind of golden mist the tropic moonlight makes where water and land meet. They had been laughing like children, when the man threw a protecting arm around the girl and drew her to him.

"Oh, my love," he said, "shall you forget?"

And smiling back at him, "I am forgetting now," she said.

When Their Majesties Abdicated

BY CHARLES MICHAEL WILLIAMS

So wet and salt was the wind with scudding spindrift that Stoughton could not tell for a time whether or not it rained, and this keen-edged wind blowing through the tall, stiff wire-grass created a steady, sibilant tumult of sound, the booming of the surf forming a deep diapasonic undertow. Heavy clouds drove sullenly landward across a gray and turbulent sea, over which rode the rough riders of big waves, and the miles-long stretch of the beach was dimly white with their tumbling charges. It was the raw, drab beginning of a November day. Far and keen came down through the uproar of wind and water the call of a wild drake leading the flight of his flock, and Stoughton exclaimed disgustedly as he peered upward at the dark, low sky. More than one flock of ducks had already passed invisibly over him, where he crouched in a blind by the edge of the pond of brackish water that ran to the beach line. Listening intently, he heard, as he had heard before, the distant sound of guns, and he knew that some other hunter or hunters were having the luck of the morning.

Stoughton's retriever pricked up her ears at the shots and looked wistfully into her master's face, as if reproaching him for the inactivity she detested.

He smiled and patted her head. "Never mind, Trixy," said he; "our luck must turn sometime. It has been a pretty tough run of it lately for both man and doggy, hasn't it, old girl? And who do you suppose can be shooting over there, Trix? Poachers? For none of the club men have been down. Let's run

over and poke 'em out, Trix." And he swung his long legs out of the pit and set out for the other side of the pond. Stoughton was in a mood to be severe with poachers—since the mood itself was glumly bitter.

He turned to the left and climbed the sand bank that lay between pond and beach, meaning to follow the beach to the other bank of the pond. He stopped in surprise. The line of the surf was within a few feet of the bank; never had he seen a higher tide or a surf that broke so far inland. The restless waves in places had touched the bank. Stoughton looked grave. Decidedly a heavy storm was brewing, and for a moment he hesitated, and was minded to turn back to the comfortable clubhouse half a mile inland. But at last, shrugging his shoulders, he pushed on. Idle moping in the big house he occupied alone would be worse than a wetting.

A quarter of an hour's brisk walking brought him within sight of an old disused hut in Thumb Cove, a bend of the pond near the beach line. Drawing nearer, he saw a horse and light buggy back of the hut, and at the same moment he stopped short. Three figures had appeared above the level of the wire-grass, at the edge of the pond. There was the tall figure of a man; there was a boy; and there was a slim, tall girl, clad in short heavy skirts and a shooting jacket. The red feather in her peaked cap brought a dash of color into the gray dawn scene. Man and boy stooped to the water's edge to secure the decoys, and the girl advanced toward the hut.

"And so Jessie Graham is my

poacher," muttered Stoughton. He made a step as if to retreat, and then wheeled sharply around.

Jessica Graham had poached upon the preserves of Philip Stoughton's peace before this invasion of the Seaconsett Gun Club's territory, and Stoughton was not pleased to observe that the latter invasion was authorized by the presence with her of Barron Kenealy, a fellow-clubman whom Stoughton disliked for the very simple and adequate reason that Jessica liked him. Jessie's other companion was her fourteen-year-old brother, Billy Graham.

Jessica was a native of the little Massachusetts island, as was Stoughton. Kenealy was not an islander. He was a Boston artist who had come to Seaconsett to paint its wild shores, fantastic sands and wind-blown woods—and, after a while, Jessica Graham. She figured in the canvas which made a distinct success for its author at the last exhibition in New York. Stoughton had become crudely, deeply jealous; for he made no secret of his feeling for the girl, and he had blundered woefully by expressing to Jessica a scorn for all such paltry, finicking achievements as this of the painter's, in which the girl took such genuine delight. There had been a quarrel on the spot, and as Stoughton rushed from the house with certain bitter words ringing in his ears, he had met the artist entering. Half an hour later he went tramping on his way to the club-house at South Beach, his dog wistfully eyeing his bowed, silent figure.

That was two nights ago, and so far he had not fired a shot. The first day he had done nothing but wander the sands miserably, thinking of Jessie's words to him. And when a man goes into solitary places

he is bound to meet and to face that companion he shuffles away from in crowds—himself. Stoughton had to admit to himself that the girl had been right; he who professed light scorn for Kenealy's work, did no work himself. He lived idly and uselessly on the island, so much of which he owned, passing his days in hunting, fishing—yes, and plainly loafing.

"Mr. Kenealy's work may not be understood by you," Jessie had said; "and it is not my duty to make it plain to you; but you can't deny that he works, and does something with his life."

And Stoughton had to tell himself that he did nothing with his life. What could he offer this girl? Nothing but dollars, and she cared little for those; he had not an ideal, not a worthy deed to lay before her, and it had become plain to his eyes that he, Philip Stoughton, aside from his money and lands and guns and dogs, was rather a nonentity, and he had sworn to himself that such he must not remain. He would prove to Jessica Graham that he was a man who could do things; he would show her what he could do.

Yes, but what could he do? What should he do? These were questions unanswerable at present; and he had blushed again for his vagueness of thought, and his very anger at himself enkindled a light that showed him a way—a practical, common-sense way. He would go home and enter into correspondence with the Boston capitalists who had been rebuffed by him when they approached him with a plan for turning the island into a great summer resort. He had not cared to change old Seaconsett thus, although Seaconsett's other citizens were keenly desirous to have him do so; and now he saw that he must



DRAWN BY FRED J. ARTING

"He heard the distant sound of guns."

consider their interests and wishes. It was but arrant and narrow selfishness in him to keep the island down to the scale of a great preserve for his fishing and shooting. He would see these Boston men. He would not permit them to do as they wished, and control the business; no—he would not simply sell them lands and privileges; but he would make the interests of the island his own particular care, to be conserved

for the benefit of the citizens at large, and he felt a glow at the thought that again the name of Stoughton might mean what it had meant in the days of his grandfather, the pioneer islander, the sturdy old fighter and jurist who had been as a king in his day.

And Jessica would thus see that she had judged him wrongfully. Anyway she would probably marry Kenealy, and go away, and care

little whether or not she had judged him wrongfully, and again Phil's heart was downcast. But as he thought longer and deeper, thinking as never before in his life, he came to see that after all it was more important that he should rescue his life from stagnation than that it should be made joyous by Jessica's love; and he felt deeply that he owed the girl gratitude for that she had shown him his life as it appeared in the eyes of others, and as he watched her approach, although his heart was sore because of the presence of Kenealy, his thoughts of her were gentle.

She flushed deeply as she saw him, and they exchanged formal and reserved salutations. Kenealy and the boy came up. There were constrained greetings between the men, cordial ones between Stoughton and the boy.

"We are in for a storm, I should think," said Kenealy. "I had no idea it was blowing up like this. Magnificent scene, is it not, Miss Graham? I wish we had our sketch-books with us."

They looked seaward. The ground on which the hut stood was elevated somewhat above the general level, and they could see across the top of the sandbank. Between hut and bank ran a narrow arm of water. The hut stood on a little peninsula near the landward side of the sand barrier. The starting point of the peninsula was close to the bank and was low and marshy land. As the silent group stared seaward, partially sheltering themselves beside the hut, the gathering fury of the storm created a sentiment at once admiring and ominous. The scene, said Kenealy, was a symphony in wild grays and black. Jessie rewarded the simile with a smile of approval. Stoughton made a wry face.

"I'd suggest admiration from a distance," he said. "You'd do well to get started for home."

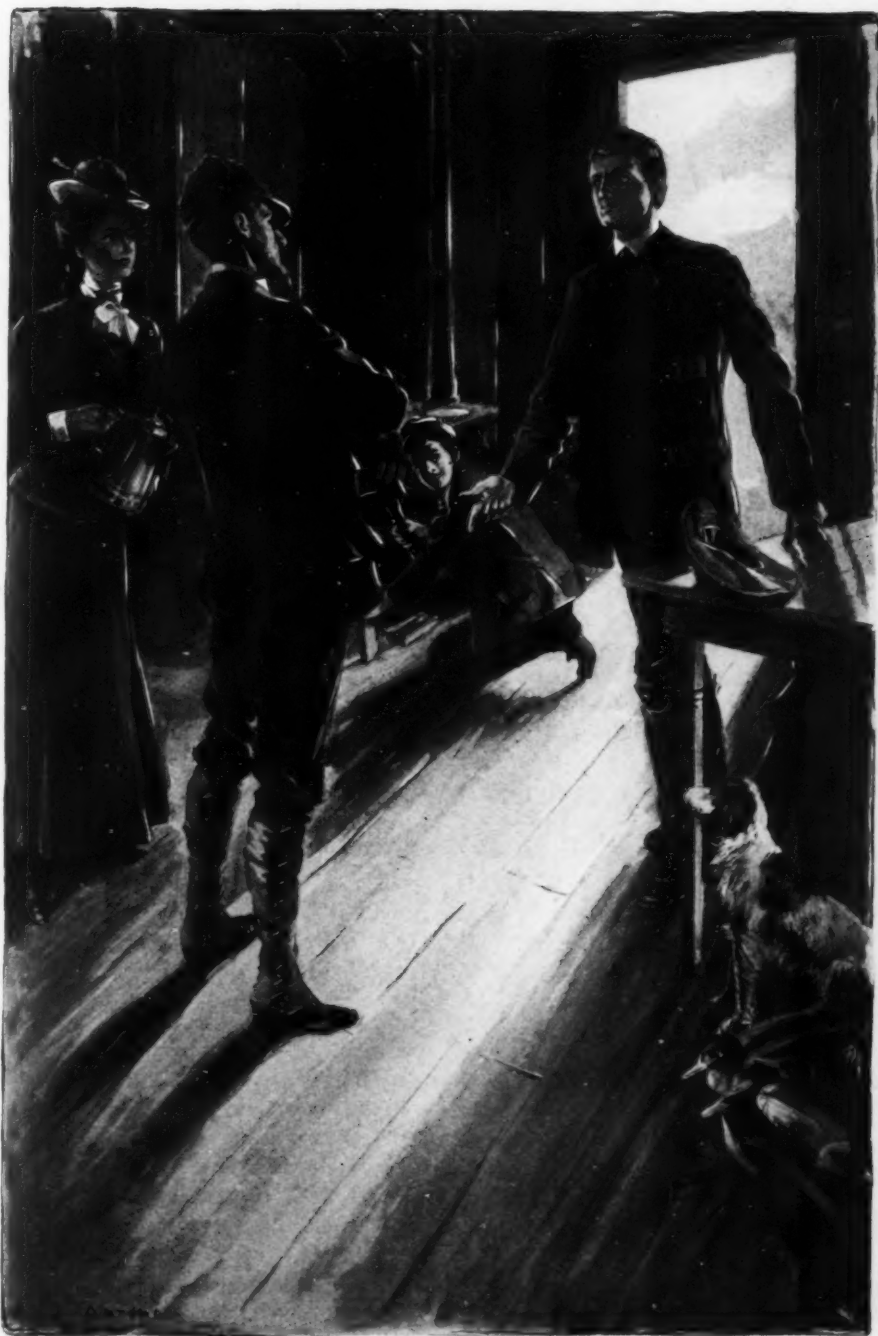
"I think we could find room for you in the carriage, Phil," said Jessie.

"No, thank you," Stoughton said, "I'll go back to the club-house. Good morning."

Kenealy smiled and shrugged his shoulders, and Jessie looked after the tall retreating form with a puzzled little frown. She had detected a new, strange note in Stoughton's manner.

Phil walked straight ahead, and suddenly became aware of a new sound in the boisterous concert of the gale. He saw that the sea had breached the sand bank and was rushing through the gap in waves that every moment grew broader as the sand was scooped from beneath and from each side. The break was opposite the base of the little peninsula. Already the water was rising upon it. Jessica and her companions hastily clambered into the carriage, when Stoughton cried out warningly to them. The horse came to a stand at the edge of the water, which now was rushing across the low land at the base of the peninsula. Kenealy urged on the animal.

"Hold him where he is, Kenealy," said Phil, "until I see how deep the water is." He stepped forward. The first pace plunged him to his knees; with the next the water poured into the tops of his thigh boots; with the third he was swept from his feet and only saved himself from being carried out into the pond by grasping a bush. He scrambled back to dry land. "It is worse, much worse than I thought," he said; "the water has scooped a hole eight or ten feet deep through this sandy soil. There is no getting across except with a boat. We are marooned."



DRAWN BY FRED J. ARTING

"Somebody has to boss it, and I'll take the place." See page 37

The shrill, joyous voice of the boy piped out, "Why, then we are on a desert island; who cares? It's great!"

His sister smiled. "Then I am a female Crusoe? Well, my men Friday must think of a way to rescue me."

"We are on a desert island, as Billy says," Stoughton said, gravely; "but I don't know how long the island may last, and there is no boat nearer than the Angle Club-house, and that is two miles away, and I don't believe there is anybody there at present. We are in for a hard storm, this place is nothing but a sand spit, the tide has a couple of hours yet before it ebbs, and the wind is decidedly increasing."

A wild surge of the gale buffeted them as if to emphasize his words; the spindrift and flying sand stung their faces, and even as they turned away from the front of the hut they saw another segment of the sand-bank crumble away and a white-crested wave roll through the gap. They took shelter in the hut. It was small, and slight, and rested on the ground. It shook in the assaults of the wind, and the rain-water blew through the gaping cracks.

"What shall we do? We cannot possibly stay here," said Jessie.

"I'll swim across and get help," declared Billy.

"You couldn't do it, my boy," Phil answered; "the current racing through that gap would sweep you far into the pond and you'd have a quarter of a mile of icy water to swim through before you could touch shore. I wouldn't risk it myself."

Jessie looked at him for a moment. She turned to the artist. "Your imagination is never limited, Mr. Kenealy," she said. "What can you suggest?"

"We're in a deucedly awkward

fix," said Kenealy, disconsolately. "I wish I'd brought my pocket flask. I feel wretchedly cold; this hut is very damp and draughty."

"It is indeed," said Jessie, in a dismal voice. Her clothes were wet; she was shivering, and she felt faint and dispirited. She had eaten nothing since early the night before. "What *are* we to do? Cannot you men suggest anything?"

There was an uncomfortable silence. Jessie huddled near the empty and rusty stove. The rain lashed the roof as if with whips of many thongs; the roof leaked profusely; drip-drop, the water fell on the floor and the little table, and outside the storm roared. Stoughton heaved himself to his feet.

"Well, don't let's get into the dumps," said he; "let's set things moving." The girl looked at him enigmatically. Kenealy gave him a cold glance. The boy cried, "That's the way to talk, Phil!"

"Thank you, Billy—and clean out the stove, my boy." Billy jumped for it. "Jessie, would you mind going through that cupboard and see if the boys from the club have left anything fit to eat? I guess we are all pretty hungry." Jessie silently obeyed.

"Mr. Kenealy, would you mind taking that old hatchet and cutting up some wood? There is quite a pile of it behind the hut."

"In this beastly rain?" cried the artist, who was nettled by Stoughton's sudden assumption of command. "May I ask what you intend to do?"

"I'll get on the roof and stop up some of the leaks. We may have to stay here some time; and I'll help with the wood when I get down. I fancy it is raining up there as well as on the ground."

Kenealy flushed angrily. "I don't

like your tone, Mr. Stoughton," he said, in his chilliest Boston voice. "I will take my part in the work, of course—but I don't relish being ordered about as if I were a 'long-shoreman.'"

Stoughton, too, flushed. For the moment he looked like a big, bewildered boy, and "I beg your pardon" trembled on his lips. But some emanation of opposing will, some thrill of antagonistic emotion from Kenealy, something, perhaps, in the quality of the artist's half-sneering smile, stopped the half-uttered words of apology. Phil's boyish confusion and indecision of purpose vanished utterly. He drew himself up and said, curtly, "Please be so good as to do what I say."

"I shall do nothing you say," retorted Kenealy, white now to the lips.

"You will," said Stoughton, "or else——" and he took a step forward.

"Or else—what?"

"Or else I'll put you out of here to shift for yourself," declared Stoughton, hotly. "This happens to be a desert island, Mr. Kenealy. Somebody has to boss it, and I'll take the place."

Kenealy faced Stoughton for a moment, and then his eyes drooped sullenly. "I don't care to go to the extreme in a quarrel before a lady," he said, and took the hatchet and went out.

"Gee! Phil is king of the desert island!" cried Billy.

"Get on with your work," said Stoughton.

"Yes, sir," said Billy, promptly obeying and forgetting that ordinarily Stoughton was "Phil" to him.

"You would better put those things out of the way of the leak, Jessie," the king went on.

"Yes, Phil," said Jessie, meekly. Stoughton went outside and fired

his gun, a repeater, six times in the air. "We'll do that every few minutes," he said to Kenealy, in a frank voice, as if nothing had occurred between them. "There may be people at the Angle Club, and they may hear us." Kenealy made no reply. Stoughton repaired the roof with some loose boards, weighing them down with heavy stones from the open-air fireplace, where the clubmen had their clam-bakes. Then he carried in the wood Kenealy had cut. There had been some dry kindlings in the hut and Billy already had a brisk fire going. Coffee was boiling; canned baked beans were soon steaming beside a heap of pilot-biscuit. Rosy, warmed, flushed, Jessie's face smiled above the table, and Stoughton experienced the quaintest, most poignantly pleasant feeling imaginable of coming into a home; rude, rough, fantastic as were the circumstances, the place, the fare. The sudden vision of Jessica thus smiling above a table set for him alone, in a home of theirs only, struck a glad thrill to his heart, which was followed by a pang of pain. Ah, would that it might be so! But, alas, probably it would never be so!

Perhaps the coffee was bitter, and the baked beans more than a trifle stale—but there was hunger for sauce. How the wind howled and the surf boomed its biggest guns! The hut shook and swayed, stray splashes of water sprinkled them from the roof; but they were warm, they were safe for the time. Even Kenealy's moroseness in Stoughton's presence thawed somewhat; and so domestic, so cheerful was the impression of the occasion that even Stoughton forgot the menace of the rising water.

But before they finished the meal, there came a thumping buffet of



DRAWN BY FRED J. ARTING

"The king is out of a job. He abdicates." See page 39

water against the side of the hut that seemed almost to threaten its overthrow, and they rushed to the door and threw it open. The rush of the wind was so violent that it blew the fire into an ascent of flame that hurled the covers from the stove. They were lashed with wind and rain and sea water. The sandbank was all down in front of them; the water was up to the hut, and now with a

surge the waves were against it, and under it, and bigger waves were following.

The water rose. The hut swayed, moved, and then floated toward the pond, scraping on the group and leaning dangerously over. Stoughton tied a piece of rope to the stove; then put on his gloves and threw the hot stove out the doorway. "It may act as a stay, as an anchor," said

he, "and perhaps keep us from getting into deep water."

The battering seas, however, here on the shallow ground, struck them blows heavier and heavier, and the hut leaned more and more to one side. The king of the obliterated island ordered his followers—mutely obeying followers were they now—to keep to the seaward side, and they partly balanced the structure. But the water poured in, bubbling up through the cracks in the boarding, and swashed along the floor. They were soon knee-deep in water, and the hut leaned further and further.

"The stove does not hold us!" cried Phil. "We are being knocked over and along to the lake, and there we are bound to turn turtle. We must get outside and onto the roof, and cling there. We can't stay in here until we get into the lake; we'd drown like rats in a trap. Jessie, dear, you first. Come!" And she moved in obedience to his command—

"Oh! Keep still; listen! Hark! Do you hear?" Kenealy suddenly yelled; but his injunction was not needed to still them all. They heard a dull report; others followed;

guns were being rapidly fired not far away.

"Thank God!" breathed Jessie. "We should have perished in the cold water!"

Stoughton peered through the doorway. "It's all right," he said, briefly; "I see the boat. It's the steam launch from the Angle Club. I guess we can hold out here until the launch comes. We are safe."

Jessie came to his side. "Thanks to the king," she said, softly. Kenealy and Billy were in the doorway now, firing their guns. Stoughton glanced at them, then at the girl.

"The king's occupation is gone," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "The adventure is over. Kenealy will get a picture out of the episode, I suppose. The king—he is out of a job. He abdicates."

"Even in abdication a king should—should have the queen with him—especially when she, too, abdicates," whispered the faint, faint voice of Jessica. All about them there was the gray of storm, but her face was a rosy beacon, beckoning to hope, for Stoughton.

"You mean?" he cried.

"Must I explain?" Their eyes met. He read the explanation.



Fate's Little Game

BY LEIGH GORDON GILTNER

"I quite agree with you, Miss Thayer. You have, as you say, every right to the truth. If you were a nervous or hysterical patient I should try to dodge the issue; since you're neither, I shall say frankly that the operation is a delicate one and the chances——"

"Are even, perhaps?"

"Are not altogether in your favor."

"And without the operation?"

"No chance whatever." Devon spoke quietly, but his lips were white. There was a brief silence in the room, then Ernestine said simply:

"Thank you, Doctor. I wanted the exact truth and I appreciate your frankness."

"On the other hand"—the young surgeon clung desperately to the professional tone and manner—"it is only fair to say that I have been extremely successful with this operation—it is, in fact, my specialty; I shall have the assistance of Rydal, who is an expert in cerebral affections; and you have naturally a fine constitution. With all these things in your favor it is scarcely probable—indeed it is most unlikely——" He paused for the simple reason that he found it impossible to control his voice. He could not tell this girl, who had probably never given him a thought in other than his professional capacity, that for the first time in the course of his career he had been seized upon by a sudden, uncontrollable panic; that though he realized perfectly his own powers, he questioned his ability to steady himself sufficiently to perform this operation which had heretofore seemed so simple; and that he had resolved to risk Rydal's lesser skill rather than attempt it. He might

perhaps school himself to give Rydal the benefit of his expert assistance, but the bare thought that Ernestine's fate hung in the balance so unnerved him that he dared not trust the skilled hand which hitherto had never faltered or failed in its office. He had chosen Rydal because of a contagious confidence and courage, a certain dash and daring in his methods; to his young enthusiasm this life would mean no more than another, and for this very reason Devon depended upon him, though, without egotism, he knew himself infinitely Rydal's superior in skill and knowledge. He cursed himself for a coward; he reproached himself cruelly that he should fail her when she had most need of him; but in the presence of her peril he felt himself, to his utter humiliation, as helpless as the merest tyro.

Devon had known Ernestine Thayer but slightly before her illness, but she had attracted him strongly from the first—and because of this he found himself distinctly at a disadvantage in his attendance upon her. His ideals of professional conduct were of the highest; he had rigidly schooled himself to regard his patients impersonally—a mode of procedure which he had found most conducive to the successful conduct of his cases; but in this instance the personal and professional interests had proven inseparable by any effort of the will. Yet he did not realize how far his feeling for the girl had colored his professional judgment. His fears exaggerated the danger and caused him to take the gloomiest possible view of the situation; while Ernestine, wholly unaware of this, had not



DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA

"Thank you, Doctor. I wanted the exact truth."

merely accepted his dictum, which was sufficiently discouraging, but read yet darker possibilities between the lines and construed his words to mean literally that the operation was a last resort and that there was practically no hope.

When he had gone, she lay for a long while very quiet. In a few hours, perhaps, she would be dead. She did not fear death—except as every healthy organism (and Ernestine, till now, had been the very embodiment of strength and vitality) shrinks from dissolution; she did not cling to life—save that she felt she had never known life in its fullness and completeness—had never really lived.

Ernestine's brief existence had been a singularly lonely one. Always she had felt herself more or less an alien. Her mother had died during the girl's infancy; her father had been absorbed in scientific research and practically oblivious to his daughter's existence; and at his death she had passed to the care of an uncle no less absorbed in financial pursuits and equally oblivious to her presence in his house. As Marston Thayer's niece and presumptive heiress her welcome to the most exclusive circles was assured; her beauty won her admirers innumerable and suitors not a few; her acquaintance was extensive, yet she often felt wearily that there was no one upon whose genuine friendship she might reckon. She was handicapped by a timidity which was commonly construed as coldness, and an inherent reserve which passed for hauteur. Though she hungered for affection, she felt that she somehow lacked the power to attract it. It must be, she told herself, that she was absolutely lacking in magnetism and charm. And so her pride took refuge in an

increased reserve, which rendered her but the more inaccessible to the love she craved.

And now, as she felt herself face to face with death, her utter isolation appalled her. There was no one to whom her existence meant much, in whose life her passing would leave a blank. She had no near relatives besides her uncle, who was rather fond of her in a way, but she realized that she was an incident, not a necessity to his happiness; to her admirers she ascribed motives not wholly disinterested; the girls in her set envied rather than loved her; she might perhaps count upon the affection of her maid, but deep devotion was wholly foreign to Marie's volatile temperament. And so, as she lay with the shadow of death upon her, the girl felt bitterly that there was no one to care greatly or mourn her deeply if that night she should go out into the darkness that seemed so near. And for her own part there was no one whom it would cost her more than a passing pang to leave—no one? Suddenly the tissue of convention, of pride and reserve, with which she had veiled her inner nature, fell away. Here at the gates of death there was no room for equivocation or self-deception. For the first time she admitted that which she had hitherto denied even to herself—her feeling for a man upon whose interest she had no slightest claim. She did not deceive herself. However much Malcolm Ward might mean to her, she knew she was less than nothing to him. He had been courteous to her always, with a characteristic courtesy at once inherent and impersonal—but nothing more.

When she had asked Devon for the exact truth as to her chances, there had been in Ernestine's mind a half-formed thought which had

grown into a resolve. Her life had been so empty, so colorless, so barren in its outer and visible form; yet within there were deeps on deeps of tenderness, a wealth of impassioned devotion and a fervor of love which must forever lack expression—unless she could find courage to bequeath them, a free-will offering, to this man whom she had loved because he seemed to her more worthy of love than any other she had known.

It was not easy, even in the shadow of death, to break down the barriers of a life-long reserve, to lay bare her heart to the man to whom she had given it unsought; but at least she knew that she might trust him; might rely upon his gentlemanly instincts and the fine, inborn chivalry of his nature; might know that he would respect her trust even in thought and that he would not utterly despise the legacy of a love he could never have returned. It did not occur to her that she had no right to burden him with a remorse he had not merited; rather it seemed to her lonely heart as if no life could but be the richer for such a love as hers. She asked nothing; she only gave. When her message should come to him she would be beyond the reach of human tenderness. Surely it could not be wrong to give one's whole heart, asking but a thought in return. Absorbed in her loneliness and longing, she utterly failed to realize the portion of regret, remorse and pain she was preparing for the man she loved. And so, almost before she knew, she had written, against the protest of the nurse, a few swiftly-penciled lines pouring out her whole heart upon him; bequeathing to him all she had to leave—the gift of an unsought love. The letter—the last, she felt, she should ever write—she

entrusted to her maid, with instructions that should the impending operation prove unsuccessful, it should be posted at once. Then, exhausted by the effort and worn out with conflicting emotions, the girl drifted into a troubled sleep.

The operation proved entirely successful. When the actual test came, Keith Devon rose to the occasion with splendid resolution and courage. He steeled himself to crush down all emotion, all feeling, save that of trained attention to his task, handling the beautiful head with the same apparent calmness as if it had been that of some unknown patient in the hospital wards. His nerves were steady, his hand firm and true, and young Rydal marveled at his colleague's fine control no less than at his wonderful deftness and skill. Yet when it was over, and his professional judgment told him all was well, Devon felt himself growing faint and dizzy and, lest he should forfeit his junior's respect and his own by a lamentable breakdown, he left Rydal in charge and hurried away.

Outside, in the hallway, he came upon Marie, crouched sobbing near the door. At sight of the surgeon's white, tense face, her own face went white, for she loved her mistress with all the strength of her trivial nature. Silently she followed him down the stairs, trying to find courage to ask the question she feared to have answered. As Devon descended the steps, she saw him stagger slightly and put out a hand to stay himself—his self-control was fast failing him and a deadly faintness was growing upon him. To Marie's apprehension his agitation augured the worst. At the foot of the stair she gained his side.

"*Mademoiselle?*" she whispered,

surprised at her own boldness, "*Mademoiselle?*"

Devon turned dazedly upon her. The look in his eyes struck a chill to the girl's heart. A single wild sob escaped her, then she controlled herself.

"*Monsieur le Docteur* will pardon zat I make so bold," she said humbly. "He will perhaps be so kind to post at once *zis lettaire* for *M'mselle*? *Eet ees* most important." Mechanically, scarcely conscious of what he did, Devon extended his hand for the letter the maid held out to him. Still mechanically he took it and placed it in an inner pocket of the heavy coat he wore. Then, still with that dazed look in his eyes, he went down to his brougham and was driven rapidly away into the night.

As, faint and spent, Ernestine struggled back to consciousness, her first thought was of the letter. When, under the soothing influence of the anæsthetic, she had closed her eyes, she had not thought to open them again. Yet now the operation was over—the bandages about her brow told her that—and yet she lived. And the letter—she must strive to shake off the strange languor and weakness that oppressed her and ask—but even as she struggled with the thought, she lapsed again into a semi-stupor which lasted many hours.

When consciousness again returned, again her first thought was of the letter, and Marie, bending over her, was quick to interpret the unspoken question in her eyes.

"*Eet ees ze lettaire, Mademoiselle? Mademoiselle* will pardon if I have perhaps make *ze error*. *Eet* was at *ze* first when I thought—feared—I have wish to obey *Mademoiselle*—and so—I—*Ze lettaire* has doubtless reached *Mon-*

sieur," she pursued more confidently, "for already twice he has called to ask after *Mademoiselle* and to beg zat he may be permitted to see her when she shall be able. *Ze flowers*"—she indicated a mass of regal crimson roses that filled the apartment with their heavy odor—"Monsieur brought but an hour ago. I myself admitted him and—" The look on her mistress' face arrested the girl's voluble speech.

"Marie," she breathed tensely, "am I—do they think I shall die?"

"Ah, non, non," the girl cried happily, "*ze docteur, both ze docteurs, say it was an operation splendide and that soon, in a very little time, Mademoiselle will be herself again. Mademoiselle may rest assured—*" But Ernestine had turned away her face. The letter had reached its destination and she was yet alive! A grisly anticlimax! Death alone could have justified what she had done—and death had not come to her. She knew Ward well enough to be sure that he would insist upon assuming the obligation he had never contracted; that, at the sacrifice of his own inclinations, he would do his utmost to spare her, to save her self-respect. So soon as she could summon strength she must see him. She knew it would be hard to save him from his generous impulses, but this she resolved to do at any cost. He should not sacrifice himself to her folly. The situation which death might have dignified into a tragedy had resolved itself into a grotesque comedy. Had she died, pity—perhaps even a mild regret—might have attached to her memory; since she lived, contempt—his and her own—must be her portion. But—a wild hope leaped into her mind—perhaps Marie was mistaken, perhaps she might die after all! In her



"Devon extended his hand for the letter the maid held out to him."

shame and humiliation she prayed that this might be. Death was her one refuge, her one hope. As she grew calmer, she weighed her chances, as clearly, as carefully as she might. The impassive countenance of the trained nurse told her nothing; it would be useless, Ernestine knew, to appeal to her. She must ask Devon—she could depend upon him for the truth, she was sure, and she lay awaiting his coming as the condemned wait the arrival of pardon or reprieve. The face she turned upon him when at last he came was instinct with a vivid eagerness which thrilled him to sudden hope.

"Doctor," she whispered as he bent over her, "am I going to die?" His sensitive face paled, then the color came back to it with a rush.

"No," he answered unsteadily, "you are going to live, thank God!" The repression, the absolute control to which he had schooled himself forsook him utterly. He sank down beside her and took her hands in his. "You are going to live—for me!" She gazed at him uncomprehendingly.

"Ernestine," he said, "I feel myself guilty of a breach of your uncle's trust and your own—but I love you; have loved you from the moment we met. I ought to have declined the case in the first instance, but I over-estimated my strength. I've tried to remember that I was here in my professional capacity, but it's no use. I strove to consider the case in the abstract, to think of you impersonally, but the sight of your suffering, the thought of your danger, made a coward of me. I was scarcely able to pull myself together sufficiently to perform the operation necessary to save your life, and it was only by God's grace I succeeded. If I had failed——"

He bent his face upon her hands.

Ernestine did not speak. A sudden thought had flashed upon her. Here was the solution of her problem! She had but to say to Malcolm Ward, "I am engaged to another man," to relieve him of quixotic scruples and release him from obligation. She was willing, eager to sacrifice herself, if she might thus save him from his rigid construction of "*noblesse oblige*." She did not think of Devon, who, emboldened by her silence, had lifted his head and was gazing wistfully down upon her.

"Ernestine," he whispered eagerly, "could you find it in your heart to forgive me and—care for me—a little?"

Love is an emotion essentially selfish. With the sole thought of Ward in her mind, Ernestine forgot to consider Devon. Intent upon her purpose of absolving the one, she utterly failed to recognize the injustice she did the other in giving him the answer he longed, yet scarcely hoped, to hear.

When, three days later, Malcolm Ward was shown into the room where Ernestine lay, the girl thought wistfully as she looked up at him, standing before her strong and straight and handsome, how worthy he was of the love of any woman, and how happy she might be were she free to accept that which she knew he had come to offer.

"Miss Thayer," he began with characteristic directness, "your nurse has unkindly limited my visit to a meager five minutes and I must make the most of my time, so you'll pardon my abruptness. I want to tell you, if I may, that I love you, have loved you for months; but I've been letting the fact of my being a briefless barrister deter me from tell-



DRAWN BY EDWARD JAN KRASA

"Since I have failed I am glad that Devon has won you." See page 48

ing you so. It was only when I learned of your illness, when Devon told me how near death you had been, that I realized what a paltry consideration this was and that I'd been a snob and a coward to let it weigh with me. In the face of your danger nothing seemed to matter—except one thing. I realize that I'm scarcely an eligible *parti* for an heiress, but my love for you gives me courage to offer you a lasting devotion in lieu of more conventional considerations——"

She had let him speak for the sweetness of listening to the words she had so longed to hear from his lips—even though she recognized them as the lines of the part he had

set himself to play. He was doing it admirably, she told herself, not overacting the role or protesting too much, yet speaking withal with an earnestness and simplicity of which sincerity might have been predicated. She lifted a hand to stay him.

"I must not let you go on," she said. "It was all a mistake—I am to marry Keith Devon as soon as I regain my strength."

It seemed to Ernestine that his lips suddenly whitened, but it could have been only fancy, for the next instant he was speaking in quite his usual tone and manner.

"In that case there is nothing more to be said. You have my best

wishes, be assured. Since I have failed, I'm glad Devon has won you. He's a fine fellow and more nearly worthy of you than any man I know." He added a conventional word or two, then lifted her hand to his lips and went away.

Devon came out of the darkness and storm of a wild March evening into the warmth and brightness of Ernestine's cozy room.

"I've brought you a letter—with a provisional apology," he began. "A letter your maid asked me to post for you the night of the operation—and which I had not thought of till I chanced upon it just now. My first impulse was to post it at once; then it occurred to me that it might be wiser to bring it to you instead." As her glance fell upon the superscription, Ernestine went suddenly white.

"Do you mean," she gasped, "that this letter was not posted—that it never reached——?" She stared dazedly at the unbroken seal.

"Just that," Devon made answer. "It has lain untouched in the pocket of my storm-coat since the day you wrote it."

"Then he had not—he really——" she broke off abruptly.

Devon stood looking keenly down at her.

"Ernestine," he said whimsically, "I begin to feel myself a pawn in the hands of Fate. It didn't strike me at first—my mental processes are slow—but it was borne in upon me as I was being driven across the city through the night and storm that a woman doesn't write to a man when she feels herself face to face with death, unless he means something to her. I know Ward cares for you—his manner the night he came to me for official confutation of

his fears for you told me that—and I want to ask you—forgive me, dear, but I must know—if you care for him?"

Ernestine's face was turned away. She did not speak, but her silence was eloquent.

"I understand," Devon said gently, after a moment, "and it's all right. I give you back your freedom—you need not feel yourself bound by a promise I fear I won unfairly. It would be no kindness on your part to marry me when you care for another man. The novelists are responsible for the idea that if a woman mistakenly engages herself to a man it's her duty to marry him—at the risk of making herself and him miserable for life. It's a false sentiment, of course, and I don't care to be a party to the proof of its fallacy. I give you back your promise and you needn't hesitate to take it as freely as I offer it."

The girl strove to speak, to protest, but no words came. Devon smiled a little.

"It's no use, Ernestine. I appreciate the effort, but I sha'n't let you sacrifice yourself. I've been half afraid from the first that you didn't really care for me—though I hadn't considered the possibility that you cared for some one else. I won't pretend it doesn't hurt, but I'm glad I learned the truth before it was too late. Don't trouble about me, dear. I'll get over it in time."

When Devon left the Thayer domicile that evening, the address he gave his coachman was identical with that upon an adroitly purloined missive again reposing in the pocket where it had lain so long. Its disappearance was accounted for, and Devon's disinterestedness attested, when half an hour later Malcolm Ward sent up his card.

The Irrepressible

BY DAVID H. TALMADGE

"O, young and fair the maiden was,
And sweet as lotus tea [phwat-
ever that is];
She simply made my pulses buzz
Phwene'er she looked at me.
She——"



BASEBALL mask hurtled across the room. The minstrel ducked, and ceased his song.

"Now, phwat the blazes!" he cried, glowering at the laughing young man who had thus interrupted him, then glancing about at the others. "By phwat rule in the league regulations of nineteen hundred and four do you justify yourself, Billy Williams, in breakin' off an inspiration like that? Is it that you can't appreciate the beautiful? Or

is it that you want to brain me?"

"Neither one," replied Williams. "Seriously, Tommy, we want to talk things over a bit before we go into the game, and your confounded noise distracts us. It is as much to your interest as it is to ours that we understand one another perfectly before we go against the fellows who have come down here from Bridgeford to-day, with the avowed purpose of showing us that we can't play ball. This is not a time for song and mirth; rather is it a time for prayerful discussion and meditation. Honestly, Tommy, what is your

opinion of the Bridgeford team?"

"Well," replied Tommy, showing his white teeth, "'tis my opinion that we can eat 'em up, and 'tis also my opinion that we can do a better job of it if we go singin' to the feast—beggin' your pardon, Captain Williams, sir-r-r."

He made a low bow, pulling with his hand the little tuft of red hair that protruded from beneath the peak of his cap. The attitude provoked a gale of merriment, and the captain drew himself up somewhat stiffly.

"This will be no easy game, Linnehan," he said severely. "So far this season we have had things our own way, but to-day it is going to be different. I saw those Bridgeford fellows play last Saturday at Wellington, and they're fast—very fast. Furthermore, I have it on excellent authority that they have been offered a purse of one hundred dollars to beat us. A lot of folks are prejudiced against this school, you know, and—well, we *have* been immodest in voicing our own praise. We shouldn't have been drawn into this trap, but so long as we're in it, owing to our——"

"Pf-f-f!" Tommy Linnehan inflated his chest and strutted back and forth across the room.

"That's it, exactly," said Williams, smiling; "our many victories have rendered us chesty, and chestiness goeth before a fall—maybe. There's going to be a big crowd here to-day, boys, and it won't be the usual friendly crowd of the home grounds, either. It is my opinion that we'd better adopt a new policy in regard to our mouths. I don't think we'd better use our mouths as much as usual."

Tommy promptly drew a bandanna handkerchief from his pocket and gagged himself.

"It is barely possible that things will occur to-day which will have a tendency to aggravate our feelings, but we must hold ourselves in and play ball—just keep quiet and play ball—hard. Then, if we are beaten, it won't be so bad, boys, either for us or for the school. Why, do you know, Professor Adams has a clipping from a Cornell paper which says the students here are a low order of humanity?"

"That's because we licked their team and made a noise about it when they wanted to do the licking and the yelling themselves," growled Perkins, sprawling upon Williams's bed.

"Precisely; but such talk isn't good for the school. Will you try to hold yourselves in this afternoon, boys?"

Grudgingly the team consented, all but Tommy Linnehan, who, being gagged, made an inarticulate sound and swelled out his cheeks until it really appeared as if the blood was on the point of bursting through the freckles. Then, taking it for granted that the conference was over, he departed with his chum, Ed Rollins, the catcher, singing blithely at the top of his voice:

"She kept my heart and I kept hers
Through fall and winter, too,
And phwen we tried to trade 'em
back
We found it wouldn't do.

"For my heart choked me in my
throat,
Hers made her deathly sick,
And so, dear friends, we traded
back,
This time most awful quick."

"There she is now!" he said to Rollins as they emerged upon the

campus, followed by a shoe and a blacking brush from the building they had just quitted. He cocked his head admiringly to one side. "There she is," he repeated, "walkin' down the path with her back to us as unconcerned as you please! Ah, 'tis a pleasant sight!"

"Who's the chap with her?" asked Rollins gruffly. Rollins had absolutely no sense of humor, nor the slightest symptom of a sentimental or sensitive nature. He and the bubbling young Irishman got along very well together.

"I dunno." Linnehan paused, his hand resting lightly upon his friend's brawny arm. "I thought at first 'twas Professor Adams, but this gentleman, I now perceive, has not the bump of intellectuality between the shoulders so obvious in the professor. Who then—phwat then is it?"

"Stranger to me," said Rollins. Then, with quite the air of one who has made a great discovery, "They've stopped."

"So they have!" agreed Linnehan. "Phwat keen eyesight you have, Neddy! I think they're waitin' for us. If that chap says six words to me I'll kick him. Phw-a-at!"

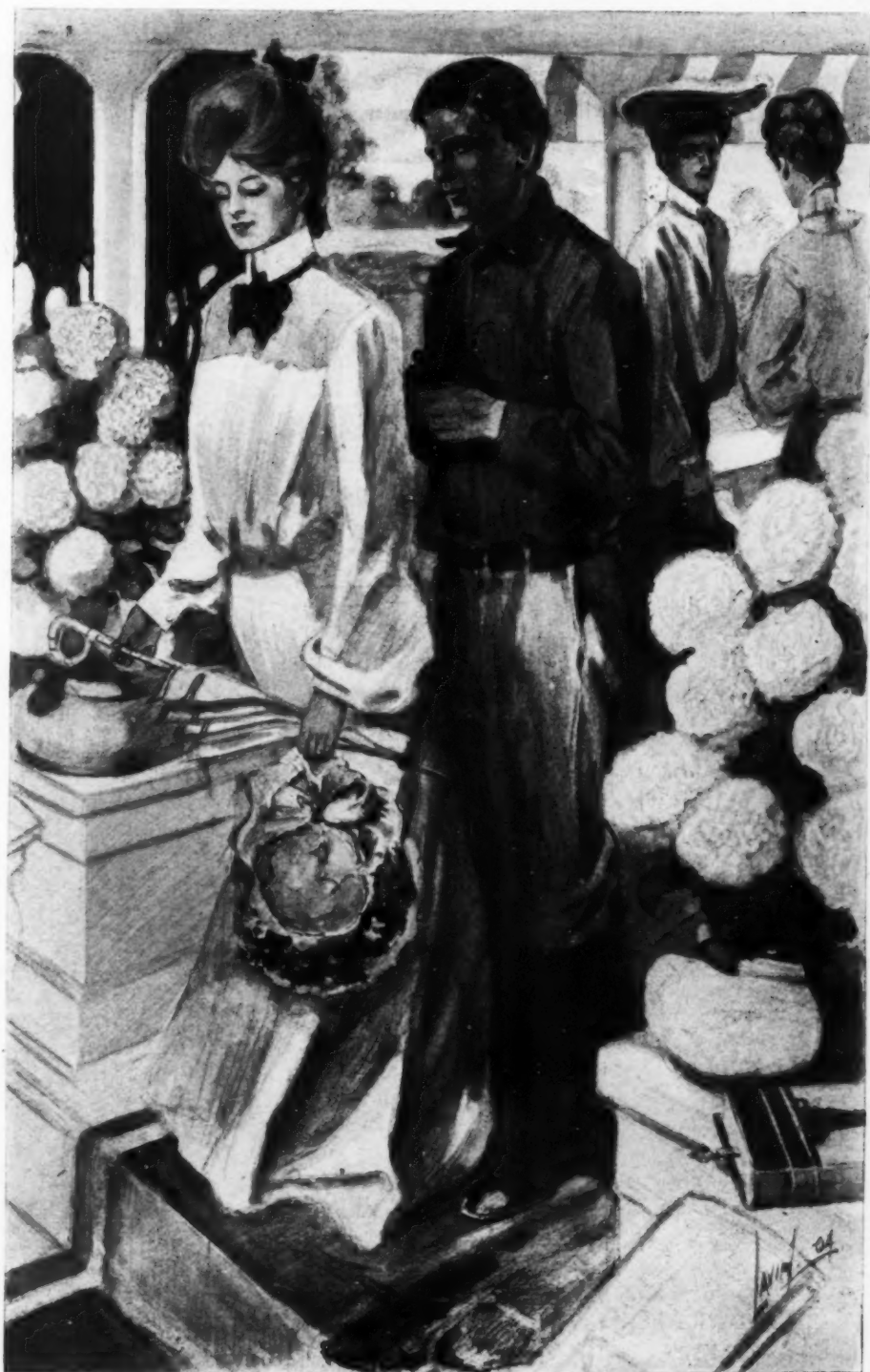
The young man with the girl had turned so that his breast was presented to the approaching pair, and upon the front of his shirt in white letters was the word "Bridgeford."

"'Tis Welton, the Bridgeford pitcher!" whispered Linnehan. "Holy smoke! Now, phwherever did Annie come to know him?"

"Ask her; I don't know," grunted Rollins.

"I will, Neddy. Thank you for your Solomon-like counsel."

A moment later Miss Annie Ashman, with a grace peculiarly her own, was introducing each to the other the pitchers of the teams that



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"Annie's eyes were shining, but she held her face down so that he could not see."

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were to wage battle on the baseball field that day. There could not have well been a greater contrast between two faces. Linnehan's bore good humor in every line, his eyes were frank and honest and his mouth was sensitive as a woman's. On the other hand, Welton's face somehow impressed the beholder as being sinister and cruel. His lips curled habitually, suggesting a sneer. There was that not unlike a malicious gleam in his eyes as he greeted Linnehan. Physically the two were of the same type—the type frequently described as a bundle of wires. But the one was handsome, as the term is used, and the other was not.

"Nice day," observed Welton conventionally.

"Bully," responded Linnehan, looking at the girl. She read the question in his eyes.

"Mr. Welton and I are old, old friends," she said, smiling brightly. "We learned our letters together in district number six—wasn't it district number six, Max?"

"Yes," replied Welton. "We used to have a theory that it was so called because the snow was six feet deep there in the winter."

"Oh, my! Oh, my!" groaned Linnehan inwardly. "She calls him by his front name! Here's phwere poor Linnehan strikes out!" And with a commonplace or two at parting, he and Rollins went on their way towards the diamond. He was more silent than was his wont. Something in the glances that had passed between the girl—the girl he loved and meant to marry—and the Bridgeford pitcher told him that this was a rivalry not entirely confined to the pitcher's box. He recalled how Annie had blushed and become angry once when a party of girls had begun to sing Annie

Laurie. He had wondered about it at the time, but had been satisfied by her simple explanation that the song annoyed her. Now the incident took on a new significance.

"Why, sure!" he said to himself. "Max Welton—that's the fellow's name! It's been a solid thing for a long time, it seems. But why"—grasping at a straw of hope—"hasn't she turned me down? Maybe 'tis 'cause she doesn't understand how I feel; maybe I haven't given her a chance; maybe 'twould be better if I gave her a chance—pretty soon now."

Rollins here broke in upon his thoughts with a reference to the coming game.

The gay little college town was thronged with people that day, attracted by the prospect of a desperate struggle between a team of professional ball players and the college team which had yet to meet its first defeat that season. The enterprise partook of the nature of a conspiracy against the college boys, although it was not so much a conspiracy as they themselves thought; instead, it was a desire on the part of certain local lovers of the national game to see a contest in which no quarter would be given or taken—a contest which might be likened to a slaughter, for no one considered the college team strong enough to defeat the seasoned leaguers. And the element of financial profit was not entirely lacking.

The game was to be called at two o'clock.

Shortly after dinner, Linnehan, clad in his uniform, called to see Annie Ashman. She met him on the front porch of her boarding place.

"Annie," said he, "I thought I'd drop around and drink a bit of

encouragement from your eyes before I went into this thing. I—I need encouragement, Annie."

The girl looked at him squarely. "Drink then, Mr. Linnehan," said she, "and may it give you victory!" They laughed.

"Annie"—a silent tremor came into Linnehan's voice—"I want to win this game to-day, but I can't do it with my mind all upset as it is and my heart hangin' like lead in my bosom. Of course, we've made no contract, you and me, but—but I thought—I thought you understood. I've never told you in words that I love you, Annie—that, when we've got through here, which won't be long now, I want you to be my wife. I wouldn't have told you now, this way, only——"

Williams and a number of others belonging to the college team shouted to him from the street at this juncture, and he turned towards them, waving his hand.

"Only, I saw this mornin' that Welton takes more interest in you, and you in him, than comes from ordinary acquaintance. I saw that, and the sky went from blue to green, and the grass from green to blue, and the fluid in my heart stopped bubblin' and froze up. I want you, Annie. I want you to tell me—now, before the game's called. Maybe I'm not so good lookin' as some fellows; maybe my conversation has too much of the blessed brogue in it; these things I can't help. But I have a place waitin' for me when the schoolin's over, and 'tis a place that will support two of us—and more; and I have a love for you that's made up from a little of everything that's good in me, and 'twill last while I last. Will you tell me yes, girl? Quick; the fellows are waitin'!"

Annie's eyes were shining with

happiness, but she held her face down so that he could not see. She did not reply at once; her heart was too full. "Mr. Linnehan," she said at last, her voice so faint that he was compelled to bend forward to hear, "I have a confession to make: Mr. Welton *is* more to me than an ordinary acquaintance, but if you win the game this afternoon I think—I think I shall be very glad."

Impulsively she took from her hair a white rose and pinned it upon his shirt.

"But you haven't told me," he persisted. "When——?"

The porch was filling with people from the dining-room.

"When you've won the game," she whispered. "Now go."

An hour later the game was called. The college team went first to the bat. Welton, the subtle sneer never leaving his face, struck out the first three men to stand at the plate. The college boys gasped, and glanced at one another. Some of the visitors in the crowd cheered.

Linnehan took his place in the box amidst a depressing silence. The silence was broken by some one in the grand stand shouting "Freckles!" This was followed by laughter. The first ball was thrown so high the catcher could not reach it. Then, biff! it was hit for two bases, and a chorus of groans and derisive howls ensued. Again it was hit. Williams, shortstop, fumbled and threw wild to first base. The visitors scored.

Welton stepped to the plate, wearing upon his shirt a white rose. Linnehan saw the rose, muttered something under his breath, set his teeth together, and delivered the ball.

"St-rikel!" called the umpire, and a wail of joy arose from the college ranks.

"Two st-rikes!" College spirits rose to the verge of delirium.

"Th-ree strikes! Batter out!" Welton, scowling, threw down his bat. Linnehan grinned at his frenzied constituents. He felt better.

The next two men were retired at first base, ending the inning.

During the following six innings, greatly to the astonishment of everybody on the field, no scores were made by either side. In the eighth, stolid old Rollins, the only man on the team who never got rattled, hit the ball for three bases, and Linnehan went to bat. The crowd never failed to appreciate this situation. Cries of "Strike him out, Welton, old man!" "You owe him a fan for old time's sake!" "Down with the Irish!" were mingled with entreaties to Linnehan to "Bring him in, Tommy!" "It's up to you, Tommy!" "Line her out, Tommy!" "Oh, Tommy, Tommy, Tommy!"

Hot with speed, the ball came through. Linnehan dropped to his stomach, then jumped to his feet, brushing the dust from his front. There was an angry look upon his face, but he said nothing. Again the ball came, and again he dropped. When he arose he shook his fist at the pitcher.

"You lobster!" he shouted; "you're tryin' to hit me!"

A growling sound issued from the college ranks. Two or three oaths exploded in the air. Williams ran forward. "For heaven's sake, Tommy," he whispered hoarsely, "don't spoil everything! Never mind! Go on now; he won't dare do it again!" Welton, his sneer become almost a leer, stood waiting, ball in hand.

"Pl-ay ball!" called the umpire.

"Sure, we want to play ball, Mr. Umpire," cried Linnehan. "It's

ball we're after; but that fellow"—pointing his finger at Welton—"is tryin' to play manslaughter, and I'm not goin' to stand——"

The growl was rapidly becoming a roar of indignation. In several parts of the crowd men were already striking at one another.

"Oh, Tommy!" pleaded Williams. "Shut up!"

Linnehan glanced at a certain point in the grand stand where a girl in a white gown was sitting. "All right," he said, suddenly quieted. He lunged at the ball and hit it. An instant later Rollins crossed the plate. The score was tied. The next two men struck out.

Linnehan and Williams walked together to the pitcher's box, or more correctly it may be said that Williams walked while Linnehan danced.

"Oh, 'twas fine, fine, Billy!" he chuckled. "Oh, my! the way it worked! He didn't want a riot, Welton didn't! I happened to find out that 'tis in the agreement by which they're to get their pay for skinnin' us that they're to conduct themselves so that the scenes so often disgracin' the baseball field will not be repeated, or words to that effect; and you were instructed to make us behave ourselves, Billy, but I didn't promise. Don't you see how it was? Those two balls wouldn't have hit me; but, by the same token, neither would I have hit them. I put things in such shape that Welton had to *prove* he wasn't tryin' to murder me; that third ball through was gentle as a suckin' dove; a baby could have hit it with a spoon."

"Great Jones!" ejaculated the astonished Williams, his eyes open wide. "You did it purposely? Forgive me, Tommy, for trying to gag you!"



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIM

“ ‘Maniacs pure and simple,’ sighed Adams, professor of English literature.”

See page 56

"Gwan to your place, sir-r-r," said Linnehan, loftily, to the captain.

No man of the visitors left the plate that inning. Linnehan's curves were unsolvable, and the joy of his countenance was something good to see. And it was all owing to the fact that a white rose had fallen from Welton's breast, and was lying, unthought of, in the dust of the pitcher's box.

The ninth and last inning of the game is graven deep in the memorials of that college town. It is recorded that during its progress a gray-haired professor of languages, a word purist of some repute, quite forgot himself and offered to fight a Bridgeford partisan whose efforts as a "rooter" were particularly annoying. It is written of record that a pretty girl, clad in a white gown, a leader in the student life of the school, conducted herself in such manner that a number of elderly ladies who had brought their knitting to the game were utterly shocked. And, furthermore does it appear in the history of the event, that a red-headed, freckle-faced young man, the chief barrier between the Bridgeford team and victory, won the hearts of his enemies.

Moments of breathless silence were succeeded by moments of pandemonium. It is solemnly asserted that during these moments windows in houses a mile from the ball ground were heard to rattle, and that an old woman, stone deaf for years, complained of pain in her ears.

"Maniacs, pure and simple," sighed Adams, professor of English literature, viewing the scene from a dignified position near the top of the grand stand. He addressed Miss Barker, director of the art department, whose escort he was. "Such exhibitions are very saddening," he

continued, "because they evidence the narrow line dividing us from intellectual chaos. Few of us—though there are some, I am proud to say—have so developed the possibilities within us that we are able to control, to master—— Look at that, Miss Barker! Williams has struck the ball! Whoop! Whoop-o-op! Slide, Perkins! Sl-i-d-e! Oh, damn——" In the excitement of the moment he had stood up, waving his arms. Now he sat down, and was grieved to observe that his companion was laughing. "It has been a lovely day for the game," he said lamely.

Two hits had been made in the first half of the inning. Perkins had made one, and had worked around to third base. A man had struck out. Then Williams had batted a grounder that failed to leave the diamond, and Perkins had tried to score, but had not succeeded.

Linnehan danced out on the coach line. "Two gone, Billy!" he called. "It's you for it, old man! Watch him—wa-atch him! He can't catch you, Billy!" The "he" referred to Welton, who had twice made a motion as if to throw the ball to first base. Williams was alternately running a short distance from the base and leaping back again. Welton sneered at these ridiculous efforts to destroy his poise. But suddenly Linnehan began to sing:

"He wore a white rose on his breast,
Put there by lady fair;
The rose it fell into the dust,
And was forgotten t-h-e-r-e!"

This was a new thing in coaching, even to the seasoned Welton. Involuntarily he glanced downward, then at the grinning singer. His hand trembled slightly as he held the ball ready for delivery. For an instant, only an instant, he lost his

cunning. The ball passed straight to the plate, and Rolins knocked it far into the field.

"Run, Billy! Hurry, Billy! Fly, Billy!" Linnehan jumped up and down, clapping his hands. "Home, old man!" he shrieked. "Take the chance! Home — home — sli-i-ide!"

"Runner sa-fe!" drawled the umpire.

The next man was retired on strikes. Linnehan walked to the pitcher's box on his hands.

"Won't you sing something more?" squeaked a voice from the bleachers, and a laugh rippled through the crowd. "Speech! Speech!" called another voice. "We just can't help but like you!" bawled a Bridgeford man from the grand stand. Hundreds of brightly-colored sunshades and white handkerchiefs waved in the air.

Linnehan, visibly embarrassed, lifted his cap. Slowly his face wrinkled into an irresistible smile. "You're makin' sport of me," he shouted.

"No, no!" responded the crowd. "Speech! Speech!"

"But I can't make a speech," he protested, "without adjectives; and I haven't an adjective with me



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"For only an instant he lost his cunning."

droned the umpire.

"Steady, Tommy, steady!" called Williams softly.

"Two ba-alls!"

Here and there throughout the crowd groans were heard.

"Thr-ee ba-alls!"

Linnehan stamped nervously.

that's fit to use."

"Try," called the crowd.

Linnehan scratched his head. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "this — this has been a great day — so far. But — but the game isn't ended yet. Thanking you, one and all, for your kind attention, we will now conclude with the last act of this little version of Faust, in which Mr. Welton and myself — especially and more artistically Mr. Welton — have played the part of the chap who keeps the *pitch* hot!"

The crowd roared. Across the diamond from the grand stand trotted a bare-foot boy, bearing a bunch of faded flowers. Linnehan bowed his acknowledgment of the compliment, and a cheer went up, which subsided instantly when he drew himself back to put the ball in play.

"One ba - all!"

Not a sound broke the stillness now.

"Fo-ur ba-alls!"

For the first time that day a man trotted to first base.

"Man to bat!"

The first ball through was hit safely for one base. Cries of "He's rattled!" "Glass arm!" "He couldn't stand prosperity!" "His head's turned!" came from all sides. Linnehan looked pitifully at the grand stand, and tried again. Seemingly it was useless. Another man trotted to first, and the bases were full.

"Oh, Tommy!" rose a wail from the college ranks. Williams was all but sobbing. The nerves of every man on the team were strained almost to bursting.

"Strike!" Even the umpire was affected; he gave the decision sharply.

The crowd drew one long breath.

"Strike two!"

The crowd drew two long breaths.

"Ball one!"

A murmur of hysterics issued from the bleachers.

"Strike thr-ee!"

Rollins dropped the ball, picked it up hastily, and, leaping to the plate, sent it swiftly to first base.

"Run-ner out! Out at first!"

It was a double play. Linnehan winked at Rollins. They understood each other very well, those two.



DRAWN BY C. J. LAVIN

"Linnehan had caught the ball in his ungloved hand."

"Take any chance!" called the Bridgeford captain to the man on third base. "Two gone! Come in on any old kind of an excuse!"

The visitors had come to their last chance.

"Tommy! Tommy! Tommy! Tommy!" chanted the college sympathizers. Miss Barker stared at Professor Adams, thunderstruck, for, softly but unmistakably, he echoed the chant. "Thomas Linnehan!" shouted the professor of languages, quite oblivious of the fact that his necktie bow was under one ear, "brace up, Tommy!" The girl in the white gown arose and waved her sunshade at the freckled, sweaty pitcher. He saw her, and touched the white rose with his hand.

Two strikes were called. The din was deafening. And then, as Linnehan

drew back his arm, he glanced at the grand stand, and in that glance saw the girl (did she realize what she was doing?) blow a kiss to him from her finger tips.

The ball was not thrown as he had intended to throw it. Cr-rack! It was hit, and a man was racing to first base, while another man raced towards the home plate. The crowd joined momentarily in a babel of groans and cheers, of sobs and jeers,

then gurgled and squeaked surprisedly in its hot, dry throats.

"Batter out!" A ring of astonishment was in the umpire's voice.

Linnehan had caught the ball in his ungloved hand, and was standing, a dazed expression upon his face, looking at the blood as it dripped from his broken palm.

The game was ended.

That night Linnehan was not to be found by the wild worshipers who searched for him, and there was missing from a certain boarding house a girl. The moon knew where they were, and an aged horse, kept by a local livery stable for the use of timid persons, also knew. The road chosen by the old horse was sweet with the scent of blossoms.

"Annie, dear"—Linnehan broke a long and blissful silence—"phwere's Welton, do you suppose?"

"I'm sure I don't know," she replied roguishly; "perhaps he's at the hotel, writing to his wife."

"His wife!"

"Yes; he married my sister, Tommy, dear."

"Linnehan," said Tommy gravely, "you're out! And you didn't tell me, Annie, because—?"

"Because I thought—I thought—something told me—it might help our team if I didn't."

"But you gave him a rose," Tommy went on perplexedly. "Phwy?"

"I didn't—or, at least, it was not my rose; it came in a letter from my sister yesterday, with instructions to pin it over Max's heart, which instructions I followed."

"Hm-m-m." Tommy pondered. "That accounts for it. He let it lie in the dirt. But, of course, 'twas only his wife who sent it to him—nobody at all but his wife."

From afar came to the ears the sound of a band, mingled with the voicings of celebration. The light from a bonfire leaped and fell against the sky. The girl drew closer to her lover, softly patting his bandaged hand.

"Tommy," she whispered proudly, "*you* won the game."

"*We* won it, dear," he corrected her gently. "It was a great game—gr-r-eat, but this—this is better."



Deseret

BY DANE COOLIDGE

"And they did also carry with them Deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey-bee."—Ether II., 3.

Lying in a brown adobe hut with her first-born at her side, pale Lucy Heminway shyly fingered the Book of Mormon, praying for a sign. The Book fell open at the second chapter of Ether, and her eyes were drawn to the third verse.

"Her name shall be Deseret," she said softly, and smiled with loving pleasure, for Deseret seemed a pretty name, and they had indeed carried her with them from the great city of the Latter Day Saints, far to the north. Over dreary wastes of desert, day after day, the little procession of prairie schooners had toiled on and on to the south, until the desolation seemed to drift in behind them and cut off the world forever. Uncomplaining in heat and hunger and the slow weariness of the oxen's pace, Lucy Heminway had sat in the midst of her scanty household treasures and peeped from beneath the flapping canvas at a landscape which never changed. Yet, if her heart failed, in the thought of home and friends, there was Lemuel walking beside the wagon. She had given up all for him—and he would understand.

At last in a wilderness of mesquite trees, near the banks of a river hid by green, the little band of emigrants halted and viewed the promised land. There, in the centuries long forgotten, God's chosen people, the Children of Nephi, had builded great cities and dug canals and prospered by his grace. But by their evil ways they had lost his favor and perished. Every one

had been cut off by the hands of the Lamanites, ancestors of those terrible Apaches who still threatened the followers of Mormon. Mormon and Moroni, last chroniclers of that dying race, whose plates of graven gold, long buried, had so lately been dug up by Joseph Smith—had they not prophesied of the coming of the Saints, and to that very land?

Into the dry canals of that people, so long dead as to leave no name, the colony of Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ turned the waters of the eternal river. Where the ancient Toltecs or Children of Nephi had planted corn and vines they in turn planted corn and vines—and they named the place Lehi, after the father of Nephi, who led God's chosen people from Jerusalem the Accursed, into the Promised Land.

Lemuel Heminway labored hard and long, building a home in the wilderness. By his side, doing what she could, toiled Lucy, who had left father and mother, and all the friends and comforts of her eastern home, to follow him, wherever he should go. If she had known the extremity of that sacrifice, the inexorable, insatiable demand of a law which ravished her of strength and beauty, of life itself, that the Church might be replenished and increased—if she had known all this? But she had not known. Child after child was born to her, labors and drudgeries increased, until life held no hope higher or better than rest—a sleep and a forgetting—just a little rest and then on with the duties of motherhood, the tasks of the day.

Yet one comfort remained in life. Deseret, the eldest of nine, child of her early love and maiden dreams,

grew up beside her as an angel of loving helpfulness; bright, strong, thoughtful, tending baby after baby, assuming task after task. When all the world turned black and she staggered at her work, it was Deseret who led her to the bedroom, hushed the crying children and washed the piles of dishes, baked the bread and cooked the meals.

Year after year added to the material wealth of Lemuel Heminway. He cleared, he fenced, he irrigated. Great stacks of alfalfa rose in his fields, fat steers lolled in the shade of cottonwoods, hogs grunted in their pens. But it is not meet that an elder in the Church, a leader in the faith, should abate his labors, nor allow his economies to slacken. "If a man is worth millions of bushels of wheat and corn, he is not wealthy enough to suffer his servant girl to sweep a single kernel of it into the fire." So said Brigham Young, the leader of the Church. Industry, economy and thrift, these were all tenets of the faith, all practiced on Lehi farms.

But, alas! that men must wear patched overalls—for it means that women must patch. With her mother broken down and nerve-shattered by the burden of maternity, duty soon called Deseret from her books and school to the kitchen of the lonely ranch house.

It was May, and the heat of Arizona summer summoned the rich alfalfa from the moist ground, lifted it high, and tipped it with pale-blue flowers, the treasures of swarming bees. The click of mowers and creaking of derricks drifted into the hot kitchen where Deseret, busy as any honey-bee, kneaded bread for the morning's baking and tended her boiling pots. Tow-headed children

tumbled upon the floor or tugged at her skirts for a smile—or a little piece of dough. At intervals she stepped softly into the darkened chamber where her mother lay, quiet and uncomplaining, waiting to be delivered of her sorrow.

Poor, sad-faced mother! Deseret wondered dimly if all women who loved God and were faithful must slave and suffer so—if she, Deseret, now young and strong, was destined to such a life. For Deseret was almost eighteen, and the Bishop in his sermons had often spoken of the duty of motherhood, the debt of children, which all the faithful owed to the Church. But surely God would spare her awhile, to care for the sick one at home.

She thought of Johnny Pope, tall, strong and gentle in his ways, working out in the hay-field with her father. If Johnny were only a Mormon—she could almost bear it. They had gone to school together; and once he had given her a flower, plucked from a wayside rosebush. But he had always been bitter against the Church, and often she had seen him fight the Mormon boys, throwing them down, rumpling their hair and feeling for the horns which he pretended to find on their heads. Yet to her he had always been kind, and she remembered how he had lifted a heavy tub for her, that very morning.

With many thoughts and many duties the time passed quickly, and soon she was hurrying to place the food on the table, as her father and the haying hands drove into the yard. The first man to enter the kitchen was Johnny Pope, brown and smiling. He seized her empty buckets and ran out to fill them with water from the well. Then, as he washed his hands and face, they talked of friendly things, and his

eyes followed her as she moved about. It was nothing in itself—yet each day both of them looked forward to that little moment of chat, before the other men came in and dinner was served. On this day Johnny stopped and looked at her closely.

"You have too much work to do," he said, at last, "cooking for fourteen people. You look tired, Deseret."

"No," said Deseret, "it is not that. Mother is very sick. Sometimes I think she will die."

The hot flush of sorrow and anger mounted to Johnny's brow.

"It is not right——" he began, and then checked himself.

A shadow fell across the doorway and a broad, smooth-shaven man looked in upon them.

"Hope I ain't too late for dinner," he said, smiling with watery red lips at Deseret, "them biscuits you cooked last time was fit for a king." His shining blue eyes roamed about the kitchen and settled once more upon Deseret. But she was silent. There was something effusive about Levi Purdy which always confused her, as many times as she had met him.

"N-no; not at all, Mr. Purdy," she made haste to say, "that is, if you don't mind taking what comes. I baked bread to-day, we had so many." Glad to escape his presence, she placed an additional plate at the head of the table and went out to summon her father.

"Elder Purdy has come to dinner," she called to him. "And it's all on the table," she added, waiting outside until he came, a square, stern man in a patched and sweaty jumper; a little white, with all his tan, from working in the sultry heat.

"Welcome, Brother," he said, extending his hard, work-scarred

hand to take the softer one of his fellow elder. "Come right in and sit down. Deseret will entertain you while I am getting washed," and he went through to the kitchen, leaving them alone.

Purdy sank into a chair and gazed at Deseret with open admiration.

"Gracious, Dessie, seems to me you get purtier every day. And such a good cook—it won't be many days before you'll be getting married. How'd you like to get married now, and go off and live with some old codger like me? D'ye think I'd do?"

"I—I'd rather stay at home and take care of mother," said poor Deseret, blushing and stammering, "she's sick, you know."

"Ah, yes," said Purdy, easily, "but sister Minnie is 'most big enough to take your place. We must all work, you know. That's the divine command."

In a mixture of compliments and preachings, he continued to talk, until Lemuel Heminway returned from the kitchen and dinner began. Waiting on the men and feeding the smaller children, Deseret tried to forget his words, but her face still burned at the thought of them, and her downcast eyes glowed darkly. As she took the little tray in to her mother the hidden tears burst forth.

"What is it, Deseret?" asked her mother. "Is the work too hard?"

"No, mother. It's not the work. But Elder Purdy—what does he mean? He looks at me so strange—and says I ought to get married. I just can't help it—I hate the sight of him."

"No, no, dearie. Don't say that. Only try to be patient and do what is right. I'm sure he means well."

But in her heart she was not. Left alone, Lucy Heminway turned her face to the wall and prayed to



DRAWN BY E. B. SMITH

"She thought of Johnny Pope, ta'l, strong and gentle in his ways."

God for her child—prayed to the old God that she had known before she met Lemuel Heminway. Knowing the lot of women, she yet prayed that her daughter might be spared—spared from the fate of her mother, who only hoped to die.

The house was very quiet after dinner, with the men all gone and the children playing out by the barn. Deseret dropped silent tears into the dishpan as she washed the piles of plates. Something told her that her mother was dying with unhappiness, and she could not turn the tide. Her father, so stern and silent, did not seem to see. He worked on, day after day, and did not understand. At times he spoke gently to his wife—and again he left her weeping. Something great and awful seemed hovering over them—Deseret did not know what it was.

The sound of voices drawing nearer came to her ears, and she heard her father talking.

"I will speak to her," he said, and the door of the kitchen opened.

Lemuel Heminway entered, and behind him came Levi Purdy.

"Deseret," said her father, "Elder Purdy wants you to be his wife." His jaws closed and he eyed her sternly as she faltered and trembled before him.

"But, father"—she cast her eyes down, fighting for courage—"he already has a wife!" she cried, and it was almost a wail of despair. For old Mrs. Purdy was broken and sickly—and Deseret knew the new dispensation in the Church. The chill of an unsensed terror clutched her heart—a grief different from the dull sorrows of her life rose up and choked her. As a child weeps at the demolition of some cherished dream she bowed her head and wept—for Johnny.

Before such grief the two men stood helpless for a spell. Then Elder Purdy took her hand and smoothed it, soothing her as if she were a child.

"Yes, Dessie," he said, "I already have a wife; and she is loving and kind. But God, in his revelation to Joseph Smith, commanded us to take a plurality of wives that we might raise up children in the faith and be sealed together in the life eternal. Anna will welcome you to your new home and give her blessing, for she sees in it the will of God. Will you come, Dessie, and be my little wife?"

But Deseret did not speak. Until that moment she had never understood, never known that he came as a lover. And could she marry such a man, and be his second wife—bear children to him and love them when they came? Ah, no, she could not. Yet it was the command of God, given to Joseph Smith, again revealed to Brigham Young—the voice of God.

"Father," she cried, wrenching her hand from Levi Purdy and seizing his. "Father, I cannot go. Mother is so sick—there is so much work—who would take care of the children?"

Eagerly she pleaded, and her hunted eyes begged for mercy.

Moved by her distress, Heminway took his daughter's hand and spoke more kindly—yet the words were stern and compelling.

"There is one thing, Deseret, which we must place above material things—even above our own convenience and happiness—it is the Church of Jesus Christ. You have been a good daughter to me—but now I must give you up. It shall never be said of Lemuel Heminway that he grudged to give his first-born a willing gift to the glory of God.



DRAWN BY E. B. SMITH

"'Deseret,' said her father, 'Elder Purdy wants you to be his wife.'"

Brother Purdy will treat you kindly and you must be a faithful wife to him, even as you have been a faithful daughter to me. I must go now," he said abruptly, and went out the door.

Once more Levi Purdy took Deseret's hand, while she stood

abashed and blushing. "Bishop Preston will come here with me next Sunday, Dessie," he said, drawing her to him, "and make you my little wife. And now give me a kiss"—he took it and went away, smiling.

Shrinking, Deseret submitted! Then, as his back was turned, she

scrubbed her lips and cheek, and a red flush crept to her hair. A shudder swept over her and she buried her face in her apron, seeking relief in tears.

In three days—only three—he would come and take her. She would never see Johnny again—this other man would keep her always—and it was the will of God. To whom could she pray, then, in her trouble, if God so ruled the world? For it swept over her that God was wrong.

From God to her mother. Like a little child Deseret crept into that quiet room and threw herself on the bed, weeping. And could she leave that gentle mother—alone in the darkness? A thousand times, in the dark days which had passed, the tears of piteous love had come to her eyes and she had crept in to kiss those moaning lips—lips which prayed for death, and were not answered, even in that. But now, from that broken heart, a greater prayer went up to the old God—the God who did not speak in revelations to his chosen prophets—yet had pity on women and children.

Gently she stroked her daughter's hair, and the tears crept down unnoticed.

"Did they tell you, Deseret?" she asked.

"Yes, mother. And must I go? Must I leave you—and Johnny? Mother dear, is it the will of God?"

The hand of Lucy Heminway tightened and she lay in silence a long time.

"Sit down, dear," she said at last, "and let me talk to you.

"When I first saw your father he was a young man, sent by the Mormon Church on a mission to our little town in New York. He came as they all do, without purse or

scrip, and while he preached in the evening he worked on my father's farm during the day. And so I came to know him, and he me. He was so earnest in the faith, so strong to withstand persecution and the intolerance of the times, that I came, without knowing it, to love him. And he in all his troubles turned to me. Ah, dear child, the thought is sweet, even yet. But at last there came a mob to attack him, and he was forced to flee. I did not know how much I cared for him—until he was gone. All the world seemed dark. Then I received a letter—and at last I left my father and mother and ran away with him.

"You have heard us speak of the terrible journey across the plains to Salt Lake City, and of the journey here. But, Deseret, when I came to that great city and knew the Church as it is, I saw that I had made a mistake. It is not a religion for women—it is only for men, only for men. But when I saw the truth it was too late. And so I have lived out my life, trying to love my children, to do my duty. It is all that a woman can do. And now, at the end of it all, I am ready to die.

"Dear, in the church where I worshiped before I knew your father, the will of God came to each of us, and our conscience was our guide. But now we must submit to the Church; for we have no power to escape. Yet, dearest, I still pray that this cup may pass from me—that my daughter may be spared. Think, Deseret, and pray—yet, if it comes, try to bear it, for that is a woman's part."

Silently Deseret went about her work, and thought for some way to escape—thought and prayed—but only one way appeared. If Johnny did not save her, she was lost. Yet how could he save her—how know

her sorrow—unless, indeed, she spoke?

In the evening she was very silent, with dark lines about her eyes; and, wrapt in the tragedy of her thoughts, there was but a wan smile for Johnny Pope when he came softly in to help with the dishes. While her father and the children were near, Johnny was silent. But soon, out on the cool porch, Lemuel Heminway began talking—talking in the sustained, emotional voice of a religious enthusiast, while the tired hay-hands sprawled on the ground about him. Then, with a touch, Johnny caught her eye.

"You must tell me what it is," he whispered. "I will help you." But Deseret was silent and ashamed.

From the darkness of the porch came the rhythmic drone of the Elder, his voice raised in justification. For that day God had asked a great sacrifice of him, even like the sacrifice of Abraham when he offered his son Isaac in the wilderness; and now that his first-born had been given to the Church, the spirit of Lemuel Heminway was exalted, and he was moved to preach the word.

"The Church of Latter Day Saints is the only church in the world which receives the direct revelation of God," his deep voice boomed out into the night. "And as Joseph Smith received the word of God from the graven plates of the hill Cumorah and many a vision besides, so Brigham Young in the silence of the Holy of Holies receives the inspiration of God Almighty to guide his people. The President is a prophet, and all his revelations are spoken from the mouth of God. Christ is the head and master of our Church, and each revelation leads us to a more perfect living of his life.

"So, by revelation, God has commanded that we be sealed with more than one wife, even as Christ was sealed with Mary and Martha. Thereby his chosen people will multiply and come into their heritage, the Kingdom of Zion. The whole American continent shall be Zion, for it is so spoken by the prophets."

With downcast face Deseret stood and listened—and it seemed like the pronouncement of her fate. Once more Johnny Pope reached out and touched her.

"Is it *that*?" he whispered, his eyes burning.

And Deseret bowed her head.

The fever-heat of that Arizona night wrought phantoms in the weary brain of Deseret. From her cot-bed on the porch she started up, quivering with terror. In the nightmare of her dreams Levi Purdy had taken her in his arms and kissed her. His dew-lapped face had hung over hers, and his eyes had shone with lust. The extravagant horror of that trance gripped her heart and choked it. Trembling, she struggled back to the world of reality—but alas, unsoothed by any disillusionment. Within three days he was coming—to claim her for his own.

Between the terror of dreams and the thought of that hated time, Deseret lay appalled and heart-sick, groping in her mind for one thought of happiness, to form the substance of a dream. Ah, for the quiet of forgetting, of rest, even in death itself! The cool east wind breathed softly upon her face, the cottonwood leaves clacked and rustled in its spell—then the fever of deathly weariness left her brow, and with the dear thought of Johnny, Johnny who had promised to help her, she sank into a sweet sleep.

The clatter of stove-lids recalled her to the world, and she knew that it was morning. Johnny was up, lighting the fire for her. Quickly dressing, she passed through the cool darkness of the early morning and came into the kitchen, smiling.

"You are so good to me, Johnny," she said, and gently patted his brown hand. Johnny looked down and was silent.

"I could not sleep last night," he said, at last. "Tell me, has Levi Purdy asked you to marry him?"

The silence which followed her mute assent was broken by the thump of heavy feet. Lemuel Heminway was stamping on his boots.

"When, Deseret?" cried Johnny. "Hurry! He is coming!"

"Sunday," she whispered, and while he still stood beside her, Heminway burst into the kitchen, his hair rumpled from the pillow, a fierce light in his eyes.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, turning upon Johnny.

"What?" said Johnny stoutly.

"Answer my question!" roared Heminway. "What do you mean by making love to my daughter? Sneaking and whispering like a thief in the night!"

Before that question the two lovers stood abashed. Their love was yet unspoken—and now it was too late. But no. Though his face burned like fire, Johnny raised his head and spoke.

"I mean," he said, "that I want her to be my wife." One glance of understanding passed between them—then the storm burst.

"Your wife!" cried Heminway. "My daughter is not for such as you. Get out of my house—you scoffer. My daughter is given to an elder of the Church. I have seen your sneering ways, and I know your

thoughts—but beware how you defy the Church of Jesus Christ." He trembled as he made that threat, and his great hands worked convulsively, as if clenched to strike. Yet, for another word with Deseret, Johnny braved his fury.

"Keep your daughter!" he cried, in dissembling scorn. "Now I see what you Mormons are like, I'd marry a Mexican first. But I've got eighty dollars coming to me for my work, and I don't quit this place till I get it."

But despite his rage, Heminway was not deceived.

"Deseret," he said sternly, "go in and stay with your mother." She slipped past him into the room.

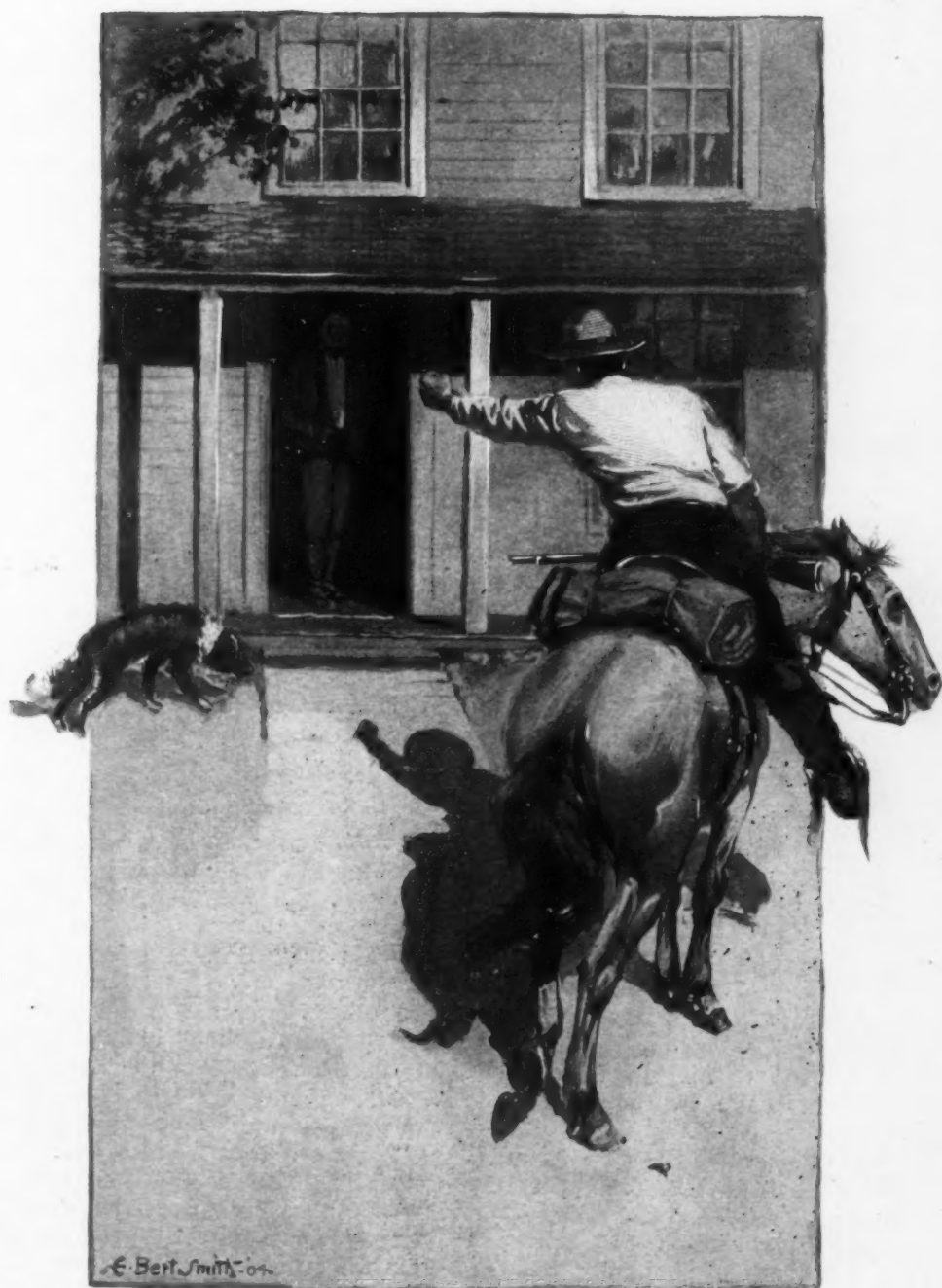
"Now you wait here until I get your money," he said to Johnny, and passed out to get the gold.

With his blankets behind his saddle, a fierce resolution in his heart, Johnny rode up to the house, and stopped. Then in calculated taunts he delivered his defiance.

"Here's where I quit you," he called through the door to Heminway, "and all other dog-faced Mormons! If any of your young Saints think I need discipline for this, send 'em out now and I'll sure knock their bishop horns off. But if any one of 'em comes skulking around my ranch later on, sacred shirts won't be no protection. I'll puncture 'em, sure as hell. This is fair warning—so look out."

There was a hush, but no one stirred. With one last look for a sight of Deseret, the young Gentile passed slowly out at the gate, never looking back, and rode away to the east.

All through the quiet of that lonely day Johnny rode out across the desert, towards the distant saw-toothed mountains where his little



DRAWN BY E. B. SMITH

“Then in calculated taunts, he delivered his defiance.”

cabin lay. The giant Sahuaros cast their ink-black shadows upon the shimmering sand, pointing, pointing to the land he left behind. All his thoughts were in that place, the lean-to kitchen, hot and tumbled with children, the weary round of duties, never done; the gentle girl whom he had known so long—would she understand? And Heminway—would he still suspect? Ah, for two days to pass quickly—for Saturday night to come! For then he would return to take his own. Before the power of the Church he would not bow his head—and if, as people whispered, it reached out with long arms for those who braved its will, he would yet defy it to the end. So much for that.

Up rocky cañons and ridges the trail led on, until at last it overlooked a small valley, fair and green. Johnny sat in the saddle and gazed at his little ranch—the house, the barn, the spring-house—all built as he had thought she would like them, for he had loved her in silence a long time. Then he looked back to the valley of the desert, where the great sun hung in a painted haze of heat and dust—down there was Deseret, his Deseret, whom he had loved and cherished so long. And he knew that she was sad; he knew that she held out her hands across the desert, up from the blaze of the heat, up from the glorious sun-land, and cried to him to come back. And for a sign he waved his hand, before he went his way.

In the morning he rode forty miles over the mountains, and with the setting sun he returned to the cabin, a marriage license in his pocket and a Justice riding behind. Leaving his companion to await his homecoming, he took two fresh horses and pressed on over the rocky trail, bound for the valley below—the land

of passion and sorrow and tragedy. Across the maze of the desert he came, riding by star-lit trails; a hard-handed man, rough and haggard, yet love led him by his honest hand.

Far from the trails of men he camped for that night and the day. Then with his rifle before him, a led horse trailing behind, he rode on through the gathering darkness—to save his beloved or die.

Numb with the rack of emotions, sick with fear, Deseret threw herself upon her cot on the porch and lay as one dead with sorrow. The longest day of her life was closed. Crushed by his harsh will, she had yielded to her father. Now he held her to the promise, forced from unwilling lips. The shame of Purdy's kisses burned upon her brow—her mother's tears still wet her cheeks. All was ended except the night. Ah, the fever of that night, the throbbing pains—the dreams! Would it never end?

And Johnny. Long ago, ages it seemed, he had said he would come and help her—then in a quarrel he had thrown her off and spoken scornfully—he had left and never come back.

Was it a religion for men? Yes, a *world* for men. Yet, of them all, *he* had been so gentle, so true. Never once until that time had he spoken of marriage or love—but helped her, day after day.

"Yet, if it must come, try to bear it." Poor mother! At last she was asleep. All the house was still, and yet filled with the sound of sleeping. Now that it was over she could hear the little sounds of the world again—sounds dulled by the agony of the day—the crack of sun-warped timbers, the stir of her dog, where he slept, near by.

Her musing stopped. By the porch steps the dog had raised himself and was staring intently into the distance. He lifted his nose and snuffed the breeze as it blew in from the east. Then with waving tail he trotted towards the road. Absently her eyes followed him—until he suddenly stopped and leaped up on some one. A tall man reached down and patted him quietly, still moving slowly towards the house.

It was Johnny! In the moonlight he stood watching—then came nearer. If the other dogs should bark—if her father should hear—what a tragedy would there be in the night! Nervously she raised herself, and at the rustle of her clothes he stopped short. She saw his head swing slowly, then he seemed to see her, for he paused and beckoned.

At last it came over her; poor Deseret, so tired, so hopeless. He had come for her. And would she go? Only one thought—the thought of her mother—and then she glided from the bed and stepped out into the night.

Hand in hand, down the path, the lovers walked together. Only once he kissed her, and then lifted her to a horse. With the faithful dog still



DRAWN BY E. B. SMITH

"He had come for her."

trotting behind them they rode away to the east—away from the valley of the Shadow—the Church that was made for men.

Three Men From Telluride

BY HARRY IRVING GREENE

Alfalfa, Cheyenne Red and I held up the Chlorid stage handily enough, but when it came to a distribution of the dividends the bond of affection and admiration which had bound us desert financiers together was ruptured, and we relapsed into ungentlemanly language and disrespectful conduct. Then we dispersed with our systems clogged with mutual scorn and loathing and I went to Amalgam City, where for the first week I stayed up nights taking the town apart to see what made it go. But when my last coin fell with a clink through the crack in the center of a green table I became penitent, and settled down hard to the humdrum and domesticated existence of bouncer in the Whynot Dance Palace.

They made a household pet of me from the start, and I began to purr and imagine I was going to like it. On the third night of my endeavors, however, after Alkali Abe had got through throwing the house out of the window, they sprinkled damp sawdust over my remainders and swept me out of the family entrance with a broom. When I awoke it was Sunday morning, and all day long I hobbled around town bitter and disconsolate. Evening came, and I heard them singing in the little church on Keno avenue, and immediately turned my steps in that direction. I went right by the church, however, and four entrances further on pushed open the door of a refreshment parlor and went in with a deferential air and the thirst of a camel. There was a little red-headed creature sitting on the bar with descriptive language welling from him in paragraphs, while lean-

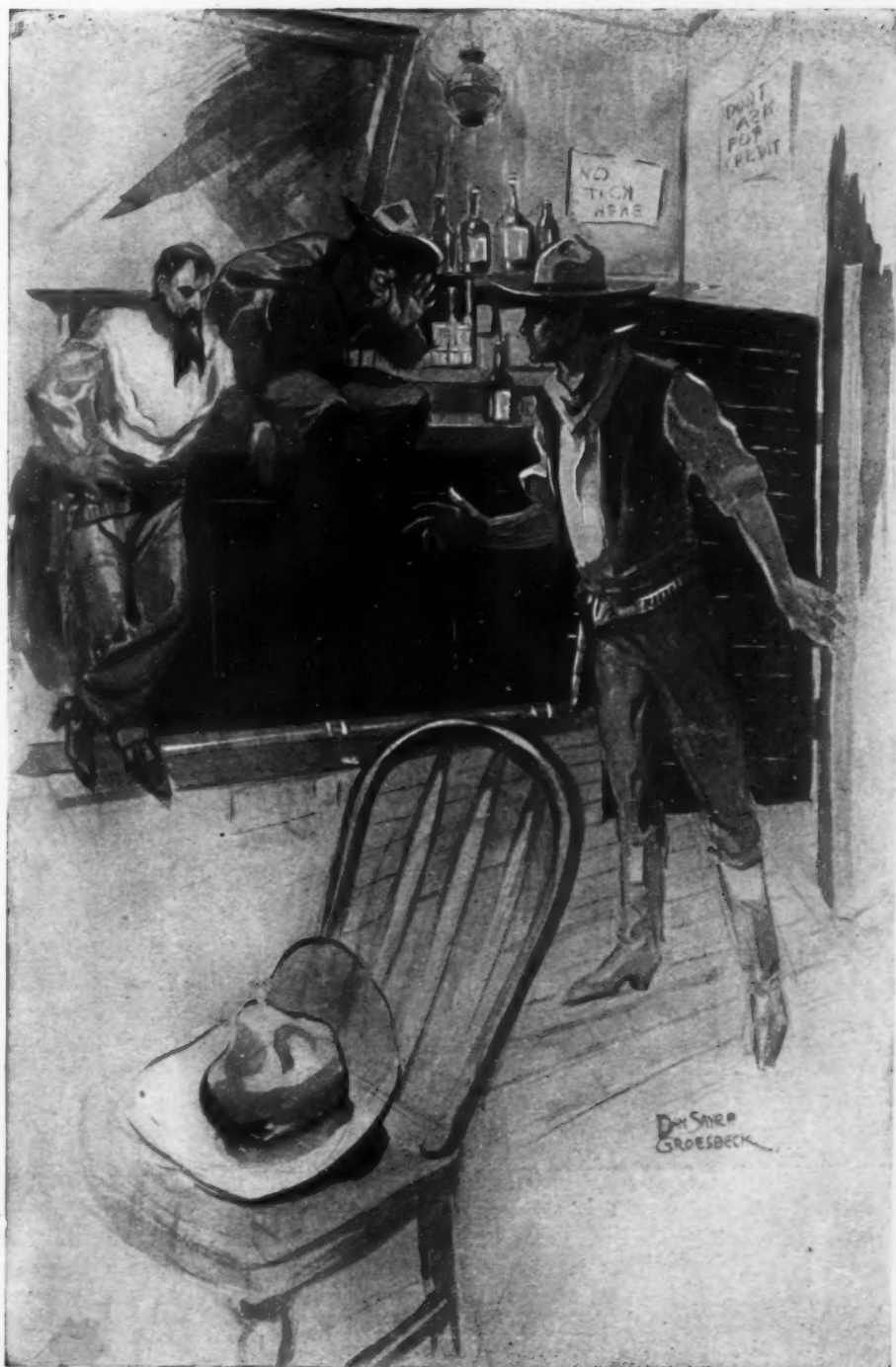
ing against the rail was another party who was making strange sounds to the words of "Coming through the Rye." The rye was in front of him in a quart bottle, and from a superficial prospect of things he had already come through about half of it, and all tired out as he was, had decided to finish the journey. Of course they were Cheyenne and Alfalfa.

Blood is thicker than water, and there were blood ties between us. I had left Red wiping some of them off his nose when we parted at the Santos, and when he saw me now he clapped one hand on Alfalfa's shoulder and wriggled his other fingers at me with a thumb connection with his nose. Alfalfa swung around with the dignity of a drawbridge, and there we three heroes were face to face again, observant and reminiscent.

"It's Cupid, all right," said Red. "And looking as if he had been trying to flag a comet."

Alfalfa nodded, and once more raised his voice in song as he pulled at the ends of his crape necktie and flirted with himself in the mirror. In the bygone days Alfalfa's voice had been merely soft and mellow, but considerable time had passed since then, and now it was rotten. When I first got my strangle hold on the neck of the bottle it was my intention not to take over half a pint or so, but, once started, my mind got to wandering and before I remembered my manners that bottle was as near a vacuum as science and suction could make it. Both Alfalfa and Red looked disgusted.

Sporadic jags are of easy attainment, and can be acquired with a



DRAWN BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

“There we three heroes were face to face again.”

college yell attachment by thirty minutes of assiduity. But successful drunkenness belongs to the fine arts and is only to be achieved by long application and ripe judgment. They had a good start on me in the beginning, but by diligence and singleness of purpose I presently overhauled them and for a time even threatened to become the leader. At midnight Alfalfa began to weep because he had never had a sister, and Red was weaving in the center of the floor, cheering the passing panorama of bar fixtures, stove and pool table. Then the door opened, and in came three fairly positive men, each carrying more guns than a battleship.

"Hands up!" they implored, training their ordnance upon us, and at those old, familiar words the weeping Alfalfa was completely overcome and slipped to the floor, where he lay like a pile of soiled laundry. Red jumped for the ceiling, missed it, and sat down with a sound that echoed, while I attempted to hurdle over Alfalfa, but miscalculated his altitude, and a second later relapsed into sweet unconsciousness to the murmur of low voices and soft music. So there we three bad men from Telluride lay in a row about as formidable as a sewing circle.

I awoke with the chaste moonlight bathing my face and the innocent stars shining down upon me. There was a new and uncharted eminence just back of my ear flaps, and internally I was dissatisfied and feverish. An able-bodied person was propelling me steadfastly through the streets in a wheelbarrow, and close alongside I saw Alfalfa and Red on the hurricane deck of a stone-boat that was following closely along in the wake of a mule. Alfalfa was lying on his back and making sounds like the rattle of chains, and Red

was trying to get on his hands and knees, unsuccessful but hopeful. He still retained glimpses of intelligence, and at stated intervals, when the boat ran foul of a rock, relieved himself of personal opinions and epigrammatic sayings. Then Morpheus folded me in his arms and once more I slumbered sweetly.

When I came to, it was with a shudder and a sense of confinement. Something was beating a tomtom inside of my head, and the covering of my tongue felt like a fur overcoat. Alfalfa was sitting on his bunk unutterably disgusted with the whole scheme of creation, while Red, too sick for words, merely lay inertly on his back swearing fluently on his fingers in the sign language. And so the hours came, tarried for a space and passed away, leaving us still gazing into each other's eyes with silent loathing.

There was a rattle at the door, the slide opened and some one shoved in our luncheon *à la carte*. It was a trough of hash garnished by half a dozen vitrified biscuits, and enlivened by a bundle of cold storage pancakes. It looked as light, refreshing and dainty as a New England boiled dinner, but Red and Alfalfa only gazed upon it disdainfully. So did I until the graceful curves of the white wrists that were thrust through the opening caught my eyes, and then my throat began to rattle. Up I got, and, wabbling to the grating, looked full into her face. And who do you suppose it was? Carmencita O'Hagan, the long-lost but forgotten. When I had been young, innocent and night chemist of the Poodle Dog, Carmencita had been the bright particular flame that roared loudest in my bosom, but when I left there I let her flicker.

We stood looking into each other's face with pleased delight. "Car-

mencita! Sweetheart!" I exclaimed, setting the menu on the flagging, and stretching my arms through the grating like rubber bands as I grabbed at her personality. But she only shied, with the whites of her eyes showing.

"No, Cupid. That line of talk is a dead language to my ears now. I am a respectable married lady, and you are barred."

"Married!" I gasped, my circulation reversing, and my heart thudding dully. "It was only three years ago that I dropped you a postal saying that I was coming back, yet already you have proved false to me. Shame, Carmencita! Who is the low creature?"

Carmencita fell to polishing the paperweight that she wore on her third finger, and dropped her eyes, looking proud and pleased. "He is Mr. Edmund Beveridge, trump card and sheriff of Tarantula County. You knew him well in the old days, Cupid."

I ruminated. "I thought I knew all the beverages that were popular in Telluride, but I don't seem to remember any that had 'Edmund' blown in the bottle. Never mind his name—what did they call him? I suppose he had some catchy sobriquet."

Her face four-flushed to the tint of old gold, and she hesitated coyly. "Yes, but what they called him isn't true. Remember the somber, artistic gentleman who led the Poodle Dog orchestra?" I swayed in my tracks with my reason tottering.

"Not Pigeon Toe, our rough-and-tumble piano-fighter?" I cried aghast, but Carmencita only courtesied as she replied, "Yes, but now he is a leading citizen."

"He was the last time I saw him—leading a bunch of them by about a mile and wishing it was further,"

said I, forcing myself into a deadly calmness. "Where is he now?"

"Gone 'way out east to El Paso. He will be absent for a month, and I am the sheriff in his absence." The pleading look upon my face as I reached my arms towards her and worked my fingers would have melted a heart of asbestos, but she only stood gazing at me with a maddening smile, a scant two inches beyond my possibilities. Then Alfalfa began to snicker idiotically, and Carmencita took another step backward.

"Come to the grating to-night. I wish to confide in you," I whispered. She turned away without answering, but I well knew Carmencita's sympathetic nature and romantic disposition, and began to make mind bets that I would not waste my tryst in vain self-communings.

The inside of the jail was as black as the wing of a crow, and through the darkness the rumblings of Red and Alfalfa came jarring and intermittent. Then the slide clicked and something warm and soft stole through it, and the next moment I had our fingers dovetailed as I whispered sweet reminiscences. Gently I led her back to the fond old time when, with hearts as tender as buds, we had trod the flowery path of bliss without stumbling over a cactus of suspicion or jealousy more than twice a day. "Let us out, Carmencita," I begged, after I had reminded her of every touching incident I could remember and quite a few that I had forgotten. The little hand grew still.

"I dissent, Cupid. It's against the law."

"But you cannot have the heart to leave us in this low place of felons. Pass us in a cold chisel in a bunch of celery and see what

a clean-cut job we will make of it."

"There is no such thing about."

"Then make it a buck saw or a manicure set—anything, Carmencita. In the name of our halcyon days before the Poodle Dog lost its license and went to the pound, grant us a real lady's mercy."

"No, it would be wrong, Cupid, and besides I might lose my reputation." I didn't blame Carmencita for wanting to hang on to any reputation she had managed to save out of the smash-up, but I only looked at her appealingly as she tried to find the combination that unlocked my fingers. Then she began whispering to herself, "Six hundred dollars. Six hundred dollars."

For a moment her whispered musing had my tongue hobbled and my comprehension stuttering. Then understanding suddenly came to me, and the cold damp of reproach freckled my forehead. Pigeon Toe, the sheriff, would get two hundred dollars apiece from the county for hanging us, and, knowing Carmencita's undying loyalty to his interests, I realized that I was up against a proposition that for real difficulty would make Hercules doing Augean chores look like a chambermaid dusting off a whatnot. Then inspiration came to me like a great light.

"How much money is there in the county strong-box?" I asked with eager excitement. She mused and said, "Probably two thousand dollars."

"Then let us out and we will get it, keep the small change for ourselves, and pour the remainder into your lap in a jingling, golden stream." It was the desperate play of a desperate man, and I felt a thrill of horror shake her like a wind-thrummed reed at the bare suggestion. Then her voice came

through the darkness quivering with indignation.

"But where would you get the tools?"

"We can borrow a sledge and chisel from the combination blacksmithshop and delicatessen across the way, and more implements than those would be a superfluous redundancy." Carmencita's breath came with a whistle, and she seemed to meditate.

"But the Male Auxiliary of the Moral Suasion and Bon-Bon Society would rope you before you had got a lather up. They have got the only tree in Tarantula County locked up in the cellar of the church, and they would hang you from it like so much jerked venison," said she in fear and trembling. But I only laughed lightly as I went on counting her fingers.

"Never, Carmencita. Behold the fertility of my genius. We will come right back here and you will lock us up again. Suspicion will run circles around this Eden of cactus and alkali until it lies down and dies with its tongue out, and during it all we three innocents will remain at home, calm, dignified and regretful that such things happen."

The childlike ingenuousness and harmless humor of it all touched her responsive nature, and she laughed low and sweet. "But would you really come back to me, Cupid?" she asked suddenly, after a moment's cogitation.

Sharp pains pierced my bosom and my blood coagulated and ran slow. "Carmencita!" said I with infinite sadness. "Is it possible that you can doubt me?" Deeply touched by my tones, and thoroughly penitent, she drew a trifle closer, and long we stood, and blissfully, with naught separating us but mutual understanding and an inch of chilled

steel. Then Red began to dream that he was a jilted timber-wolf, and at his first howl Carmencita broke away from me like a Greco-Roman wrestler. "Tomorrow night," she said in a startled whisper, then fled like a good fairy, leaving the air still sweet with the fragrance of her gentle spirit.

The next night her voice came stealing through the darkness as she gave us her final answer. Vainly we three of the inner circle made our fight against her ultimatum, but though, womanlike, she often broke ground and seemed to be yielding, in the end she had us at her feet mute and groveling as we took the count helplessly. One by one into the darkness without we shoved our outer garments on the end of a broom, then a bundle of something soft fell upon the floor, and we lit the candle and dissected it in a corner. It was a degrading alternative that confronted us, but we accepted it shamelessly.

But my feelings were wounded, and my æsthetic sensibilities writhed. "I thought you trusted me, Carmencita," I said reproachfully as the door



DRAWN BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

"Carmencita O'Hagan."

swung open and I lingered beside her for one last privilege. Her reply was tender and convincing.

"And so I do, Cupid—implicitly. But I was not born over a dancehall for nothing." One warm parting clasp of the hand the impulsive creature gave me, and the next instant I was standing free and unfettered, fetlock deep in the rich soil of Arizona.

Three desperate highwaymen of varying sizes and figures, tastefully gowned in skirts and shirtwaists as they burgle by the pale moonlight, are unusual even in Amalgam City. Red came fluttering back to us from over the transom of the combined blacksmith shop and delicatessen, and dropped lightly upon the ground, palpitating and coy. Carmencita was tall, graceful and thick, and Red tripped along with train flowing, casting goo-goo glances at the lone night watch as he sat somnolent and odorous in front of the dark exterior of the Treat or Travel. Alfalfa was tall and slender, and more than once I caught the coquettish twinkle of ankles, as I danced along behind him to the creak of dainty shirtwaists and the soft rustle of nearsilk linings.

We reached the office of the county treasurer, thrust a window up, and gazed into its black interior. "Let's throw up the job," said Alfalfa with a shudder. "Suppose there are mice inside!" One squawk Red gave, then landed on the top of a barrel, where he stood trembling with his skirts gathered in a rainy day effect about him, and even I shrunk back all in a flutter. Alfalfa was trying to locate his hip pocket, pale and agitated.

Heroines are born, not made, and I led the first figure. The safe was but a fragile thing, and we opened

it as if it had been a box of bonbons. Then by the yellow light of the dark lantern we hovered around Red as he counted money with both hands like a virtuoso making a fool out of a piano. "How much is there?" asked Alfalfa tremulously. Red's reply came low and musical.

"Twenty-two hundred and thirty dollars, you washerwoman. Get off of my skirt or I'll kick your rat off."

Back to Carmencita we flitted, and *cached* half of our winning upon her. Then the iron door banged behind us, the key grated, and at the slide a garment appeared which has ever been the insignia of true manhood. It was Alfalfa's, and as he gathered it in his arms he wept silently upon it like a fond father over his long-lost offspring. More insignias followed, and our *trousseaus* were shoved back joyously in unequal barter. Then, filled with the great peace that follows self-sacrificing duty unflinchingly performed, we lapsed into soothing slumber.

The next day the pursuit was commenced, and extended across three counties and a desert. Through the bars we watched the departure of the Male Auxiliary, and they carried the only tree in Tarantula County behind them on a pack mule. But not a glimpse of the fell perpetrators did the posse discover, and had they not chanced to cross the trail of an itinerant horsethief, the tree would have been superfluous baggage. But at the end of a week roulette and poker came back to their own, and the subject of the robbery went 'way back and sat down by the side of religion. "Now give us that file, Carmencita," said I beseechingly. But she only sighed, with her bosom rising and falling like the stock market.



DRAWN BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

"Three desperate highwaymen gowned in skirts and shirtwaists."

"They have made another assessment, and there is more money in the safe than there was the other time," she suggested archly, and that night three shirt-waisted creatures once more plied sledge and chisel amidst hysterical giggles. And again fortune came to us with glad hand extended, and as the Auxiliary once more stampeded through the town and floundered among the alkali dust of the foothills, we captains of industry sat placidly gazing into each other's

eyes over hillocks of greenbacks as we trustfully raised or called with cold aces under our wristbands. Day by day Carmencita grew more gracious and charming, and already she was beginning to use handfuls of currency to improve her figure.

A week limped by and I again implored her for a file. "No, Cupid," she said, gently but firmly. "No woman could be more dispassionately in love with a man than I am with you, but it is impossible. I am usually content to sit back

quietly and lose my ante, but when I do happen to draw a razza maz-zazza I reckon I know how to play it. They are going to tax the saloons and fine the church and make up another assessment."

Then it was that I began to buck and wing with a wild look in my eyes as I blew the fog from my nostrils. Plead with me as she would, with tender recollections of the Poodle Dog quivering upon her lips, I remained as wild as a hawk and threw summersaults so fast that she couldn't saddle the proposition upon me. At last she retired in reproachful disappointment.

Two days later she came to the slide all in a fluster. "A rumor has started that some one in passing the jail heard you gambling with real currency, and the Male Auxiliary has hired an X-ray and is coming to search you. Give me the money and I will hide it. Quick! Quick!" Incredulous and wary, we three stood passively until the sound of heavily-falling feet reached our ears, and then we began shoving wealth upon Carmencita as if we had been stuffing a ballot-box. A moment later the Auxiliary wafted in like a drove of long-horns going for water, but all they found was Red's jew's-harp and Alfalfa's "Business Man's Guide and Dream Book," and after an unprofitable half hour they departed, indulging in rude personalities. Alfalfa, Red and I sat staring at each other.

"Now who could have started such a ridiculous story as our having money?" asked Alfalfa scornfully.

"Suppose it was Carmencita?" asked that unmitigated Red. We all sat thinking.

The next morning we remarked to Carmencita that all seemed safe again, but she only reassured us by saying that in the midst of life death

often wandered. Even when we began to discuss financial matters and speculate on the probable condition of the eastern market she only smiled agreeably and went on talking about the weather. Then it was that we began to hint of our heavy daily expenses and the business stagnation that had fallen upon us by reason of the withdrawal of our working capital.

"No, gentlemen, I dare not return it," said she as her eyes began to moisten. "The Auxiliary has gone into secret session up in the next block at the Treat or Travel, and from all I can hear through the kitchen window the danger is not over. They are disputing whether they shall hang you first and shoot you afterwards, or *vice versa*, but I am hoping for a deadlock." Then she went away sadly, but an hour later came flying to the slide with a blanched face. I found some of the blanch on my sleeve afterwards.

"The deadlock is broken and they are coming to lynch you. Escape! Escape!" she cried, choking up and clutching at the grating. We were on our feet in a second, evincing interest. Cheyenne began to gallop round and round in sudden circles, and Alfalfa flopped down on his hands and knees and tried to crawl into a rat hole. Outside the Auxiliary was yelling like a crowd of bleachers, and when I addressed Carmencita it was with a touch of impatience. "Then why in the name of thwarted justice—why don't you open the door and let us fly?"

"I dare not—they would suspect me. But the window. Quick!"

The window was a crisscross nightmare of iron straps and bars, and I turned from it to her with *frapped* politeness. "All right, Carmencita. Weep for me sometimes in the hereafter." She shrieked in terror for

our safety as she went two-stepping around the outside corridor.

"A horse-thief sawed his way out of that window just before you came here for your board and lodging. Pigeon Toe—Mr. Beveridge was too busy to get new bars, so he puttied the old ones in place and painted them over with shellac. I forgot to tell you about it until this minute."

With a cry I leaped upon that deceitful grating and seized it with both hands. It yielded before my touch like a cobweb mesh, and Alfalfa and Red went through the hole as if they had been circus riders. "But our share of the money!" I gasped as I clutched at Carmencita. "Not that I care for it personally, but Red and Alfalfa are so grasping." She nodded hurriedly, and with a last look thrust a bundle into my hands. One last kiss I embedded among the tributaries of her lifeline, then I, too, was in enthusiastic pursuit of the horizon and gaining on it steadily.

A mile out of town we sat down breathing hygienically, and all aglow from healthful exercise. No one had pursued us, and the shots and yells back in the distance sounded insignificant and tame. Said Red, "Wonder why they didn't run us down and hang us? It looks suspicious and I don't like it."

"What day of the month is this?" demanded Alfalfa suddenly.

"November eighth," I replied, vague understanding beginning to percolate my system. Alfalfa got upon his feet using serious language.

"Lynch us, you fuzzy-featured, coyote-souled, lady porch-climbers! This is presidential election day and that bloody-minded mob was a bevy of soda-fountain bartenders getting jagged on watermelons and yelling over the election."

Mutely Red and I sat and writhed while Alfalfa invented new idioms of speech and called down shame and dishonor upon us. "Anyway I have got the money," said I soothingly, and as Alfalfa's voice modulated and he began to rub up against me I opened the package. Out fell a ragged, degenerate copy of "Pilgrim's Progress," and a wad of first-help bandages for the sorely wounded.

"Those bandages were put in there to be used, and I'm going to get my money's worth," yelled Red, getting out of his coat. And there, amidst the unutterable desolation of the desert, Alfalfa, Red and I uppercut each other impartially as we danced about bathed by the pale rays of the calm moon, and beneath the bright glitter of the wondering stars.

Circumstantial Evidence

BY EDNA KENTON

For ten minutes Celia had held the floor against heavy odds. She finished with decision.

"And instead of blaming a man, I'd respect him if he threw me over under those circumstances." She settled back with a sibilant crush of

silk, and all about her rose the protests of every woman in the room, mingled with not a few from the men.

"Now, Miss Terry, how could you possibly respect a man who didn't trust you enough to stand firm in the

face of all odds?" It was Longmuir's voice, and his drawl acted as a whip to Celia's yet unwearied strength.

"If I couldn't trust him enough with my great secret, whatever it might be, to tell him I was innocent of the crime, how could I expect him to believe me in the face of all those marked handkerchiefs and Indian daggers that belonged to me, and Eastern poisons only I had, and all the rest of the claptrap? No sensible woman could ask it!"

The murmur of voices rose again, and the hostess hastened to create a diversion.

"After all," she said lightly, "it's merely a tale, and a detective tale at that, and not a very good one, either. You don't know what you'd do, Celia."

Miss Terry laughed and subsided into a corner with the new author of the afternoon, who happened to be Longmuir.

"One must have claptrap at times, don't you know," he said apologetically.

"But you don't have to make a woman a fool, do you?"

"You mean that any woman would have explained?"

Miss Terry nodded with a conviction that was refreshing. "She couldn't help it."

"Wouldn't she more naturally resent a doubt? Wouldn't you feel aggrieved to know your *fiancé* didn't trust you flawlessly?"

Miss Terry's face darkened slightly and without evident cause, but she answered without delay, and with the same conviction.

"Not if I'd been found in a room with some Eastern poison in my hand, and a man in the next room had died of it an hour ago, and there was an emerald-hilted dagger in his breast besides, with a piece

of my lace caught round a jewel."

Longmuir smiled slightly. "Of course there are different sorts of claptrap," he remarked easily, leisurely. "Now I know the story of a man——"

Miss Terry settled back with an air of entire satisfaction. "It's never been published, has it?" she asked.

"No," said Longmuir. He surveyed her closely for a moment, through eyes half closed, entirely as an artist might survey a face for its salient lines. "After all, you know," he said after a bit, "this tale may turn out to be the wildest sort of impertinence. You don't see what I mean by that, of course. It's merely this, that you look something like the girl."

"Did she have red hair?"

"She had glorious hair."

"Did you know her?"

"I never saw her, nor do I know her name."

Miss Terry laughed. "I seem to get nowhere on that line. Then begin with the man."

"I met the man in Russia," said Longmuir after another pause. "He is a splendid fellow, and we fraternized immediately. But he was rather down over life and the way it had treated him of late—all this was perhaps six months ago. It wasn't five days ago—the night before we landed—that he somehow told me the story, and showed me the picture of the girl."

"Was she stunning?" Miss Terry inquired flippantly.

"She was entirely exquisite," Longmuir returned seriously. "It seems they had been engaged for some time, and matters had gone smoothly until another man came into the story. It added somewhat, of course, to the climacteric, that he had come in *in toto* after the betrothal. 'A black devil' was my friend's only

direct characterization of him, but my impression of the other man is that he must have been an interesting chap, magnetic, full of fascination—all that sort of thing, you know. I've my own story, you understand, made up about these three people, though I know only one of them, and only one side of the story."

"Is your story the same as the sad young lover's?" Miss Terry inquired curiously.

"No," said Longmuir. "He would doubtless say the difference is explained by the fact that I hadn't seen the circumstantial evidence. It was he, you see, who found the dagger and the oriental drapery and the poisons near the woman. I had only the pictured face to build my story on, and it was her face entirely which made me feel she might have explained."

"She was a murderess?" Miss Terry inquired in simulated horror.

"Not literally," said Longmuir cautiously, "though this young chap did affirm that she had slain his faith in women. You see, after this new fellow came on the scene she changed—I'm giving you the other fellow's story now—and she comported herself as if her bonds stood for nothing. She seemed to desire a good deal of this new fellow's company, and to take it in spite of her *fiancé's* protests. At last one night the first chap came across them, the girl and the second fellow, in each other's arms, and dishonorably or otherwise he didn't stop looking until this other chap, the black one, you know, kissed the girl fair and square and without any trouble. Then he did a foolish thing—went straight for the station and cut the place for good. Of course he left the usual note behind,

which, I suppose," cautiously, "the girl understood."

"Yes," said Miss Celia Terry, dryly.

There followed a slight pause. Then Miss Terry looked up. "What would you have done in his place, Mr. Longmuir?"

"I would have made her tell me the story," said Longmuir emphatically. "I should have forced her to an explanation of how the daggers and the poisons and all the rest of the dry goods came to be mixed up with her and this black devil chap."

"I wonder if she could have told!" murmured Miss Terry.

For the first time since beginning his recital Longmuir's eyes gleamed. Miss Terry glanced up at last. She smiled slightly.

"As you so properly feared, Mr. Longmuir, it has turned out the wildest impertinence."

"I thought so," said Longmuir promptly, without a trace of repentance in his voice. "I'll beg pardon later. Just now I want—"

"All the rest of it?" inquired Miss Terry with cold sweetness. "Well, I don't mind."

Yet she hesitated a few moments before she began to speak.

"Authors are supposed to be as impersonal as physicians, I believe. I understand one can talk to them of one's moral nature as one discusses physical well-being with a doctor. You've examined Teddy's case at close range, and you've tried absent treatment on me. You ought to know how your diagnosis comes out. So I don't mind saying at the beginning that there was enough in the affair to make an unreasonable man jealous." Longmuir allowed himself one fleeting smile. "Of course this other man was interesting, or I wouldn't have had him

about so much, and he grew more interesting as Teddy became morose and sullen. I'm not going into nauseating details, but as regards that last night— I sha'n't explain that—but I hope you don't think——"

"Of course I don't think," agreed Longmuir humbly. "I shouldn't dare think. But with all that had gone before, poor Ted couldn't help but think."

Miss Terry's amber eyes flashed lightning. "He should have trusted me. In the face of everything, even that last night, there might have been an explanation."

"Of course there might have been," said Longmuir eagerly, "but——"

"He should have trusted me," she repeated almost stubbornly. "He went away, and left a note telling me to explain if I could. There was disbelief in every word of it. I never deigned to answer it. He should have trusted me."

There was a tiny silence. Then Longmuir bent forward.

"I care for Ted very much," he said simply. "It is my only excuse for doing this thing, tampering with what was none of my business. You have made me feel it was an unpardonable interference. But I didn't try to throw this infrequent opportunity over my shoulder—because I care much for Ted. Just let me say one thing more. Suppose that all the fault were Ted's, suppose besides that all the unfaith were his"—Miss Celia Terry ever so

slightly winced—"even then, there are extenuating circumstances for Ted." He stopped for a moment, and by sheer force of will, compelled her to meet his eyes. "Think of it, Miss Terry," he said softly. "The footprints of another man's roses. The marked handkerchiefs of his gifts. The strange poisons of his flatteries. The dagger of his kiss caught about with the torn lace of her flush! After all, there was excuse for Ted."

Miss Celia Terry's cheeks slowly crimsoned as Longmuir catalogued the evidence. When she spoke at last her voice was very low and trembling.

"At least I am grateful to you—you seem to have been so sure all along that the evidence was purely circumstantial. Well, it was. He swept me off my feet for just three minutes. Since then I've hated him."

"We came over together, Ted and I," Longmuir murmured, "five days ago. This has been an odd happening. May I tell Ted of it?"

"Ah, no," Miss Terry breathed hurriedly. "He may not—he didn't trust me."

"Do you remember," asked Longmuir softly, "how this thing started, by your declaration of honor for even such a man? May I tell him that?"

Miss Celia Terry caught her breath, and Longmuir laughed a little. He got up to go.

"I'm going to tell him," he said. "Will you be at home this evening, about half-past eight?"

The Face in the Miniature

BY GEORGE HYDE PRESTON

The girl's face came between me and the cards.

It was the evening of a blustering day, and late that afternoon, as I was walking along a near-by street, my hat blew off and rolled ridiculously over and over in the gutter. I chased it awkwardly enough and finally captured it. And then, looking quickly around, as a man will, to see if any one had noted my plight, I saw her in the window of a stark, gloomy house opposite, and, forgetful of myself, I stood, hat in hand, gazing at that fresh, wondrous face, framed deeply by the weather-stained stone casement of the high, narrow window.

I do not know how long I gazed, but long enough to know that my heart would look her way forever. I knew her instantly for the woman I loved, and would love always.

Oh, yes, it sounds absurd for me to say—I, Harold Vanning, who did not know her name, or the sound of her voice, or even whether she were tall or short—just an unknown face at a window. Unknown! Never! For when her eyes met mine—and for one sweet moment they did—my heart knew her, though we had never met, and throbbed at the look of tense appeal in her eyes.

I had started towards her, scarce knowing what I did, when, from around the corner, came a gay party of my friends, on their way to Sir Henry Dest's to sup and play, as was I. At the sound of their voices her face vanished from the window, and I turned to meet their unwelcome laughter.

"Ho! Ho!" cried one. "See him, hat in hand, before his lady's casement."

A quick glance at the empty window showed me that this was but a chance gibe, and I retorted, "Any one, except a fool like you, would know that my hat blew off. Look at the mire on it."

A shout of gay laughter greeted my retort, and, seizing me, they whirled me along with them, whether I would or not. And I went willingly enough, lest they should suspect how near the gibe had hit.

When we reached Sir Henry's rooms we found there with him his coxcomb cousin, Lord Tissing, who seemed much elated concerning something that they were talking of; and when, after we had supped, Sir Henry brought out the cards, he lisped, "I can play but a little time to-night, gentlemen. You know the reason why, dear cousin, he! he!"

Sir Henry nodded, with something of contempt in his face, I thought. As for the rest of us, we cared nothing for the reason, so it took him away. For Tissing would have met with scant courtesy from us, except for Sir Henry; for men ever like men, not popinjays.

The play was usually high at Sir Henry's rooms, and that night was no exception. I was losing. The girl's face came between me and the cards, and my thoughts wandered away from the game.

At length I was roused by Lord Tissing's silly titter. "By my faith, gentlemen," he cried, "Vanning must be lucky in love, since the cards run so against him, he! he!"

I turned an angry face upon him. I did not mind Sir Henry winning, for he played fair enough, though ever cunningly, but his coxcomb cousin irritated me past bearing.

"You had best mind your own game," I retorted. "I see no great winnings at your elbow."

"'Tis true," he simpered, pulling at the lace at his wrist. "And that proves my point, he! he! I cannot win at cards to-night, because to-night I go to woo and win a——"

"'Tis your play, cousin," broke in Sir Henry smoothly, but his eyes flashed, and I saw him nudge his cousin under the table with his foot.

"Give over kicking me, cousin," cried Tissing, his face flushed with wine.

"Then give over your silly talk, and play," retorted Sir Henry.

"I will play no more!" declared Tissing, made obstinate by wine. "And I will tell you why, gentlemen, in spite of my cousin there. I go to-night to win the most beautiful woman in all London, and you shall be the judges, he! he!" And saying this, he drunkenly held up before us all a miniature. I looked with the rest. By heaven! the face in the miniature was the face of the girl at the window!

"You fool!" exclaimed Sir Henry, seizing Lord Tissing's arm. In the struggle the miniature fell upon the floor, and, in the confusion, I ground my heel into it. Rather that, than have it made the sport of the card room! Rather that, than have Lord Tissing possess it!

Tissing wrested himself away from his cousin, and some one handed him the battered frame, in which no semblance of a face remained.

He gazed ruefully at it. "Now see what you have done, cousin," he cried. "What can I say to her? And she gave it to me but last night."

"She gave it to you!" I echoed. "More like you——" and then I stopped, for I saw Sir Henry eyeing me curiously.

"Yes," replied Tissing, but his eyes did not meet mine squarely.

"She gave it to me, and to-night she gives me herself. Congratulate me, gentlemen! She is the fairest girl in England! Oh, you needn't look black, cousin. She is."

"What is her name?" cried a chorus of voices, and I listened breathlessly for the answer.

"That I may not tell," answered Tissing with a silly smile, "until her name is my name, he! he! Adieu, gentlemen, I must go to her." And his empty laughter echoed through the hall as he went out.

I saw relief show in Sir Henry's face at his departure, but all he said was, "Well, gentlemen, let us continue our game."

"No more play for me," I answered with an open yawn. "I have lost enough for one night, and I am for bed and a good night's rest. A merry game to you all." And saying this I sauntered out, dawdling a moment at the door in careless talk, lest Sir Henry should think that I meant to follow his cousin. When I had gained the street I threw off all pretense, and ran madly, straight for the house of the lady of the miniature. I did not know what I intended to do, but the thought of Lord Tissing going to her maddened me, and I resolved to be there before him, and let events guide me. Her look of appeal was my warrant.

When I reached the house a light shone from the window where I had seen her face, and a flickering lantern dimly lighted the arched entrance to the house, and gleamed against the heavy oak door.

I stopped short at this, and wondered on what pretext I could gain an entrance. I looked apprehensively down the street between the shadowy rows of houses, just

touched by the light of a misty moon. It was as I feared. There in the distance came Lord Tissing. I would know his mincing gait among a thousand. My mind was made up in an instant. I knocked loudly, and then, stepping back, I measured the distance between Lord Tissing and the house.

It seemed an age waiting before that door, and I could hear Tissing's step upon the pavement. I had my hand raised to knock again, when I heard a bolt drawn. I had just time to shadow my face in my cloak, when the door opened, and a bent old servant peered out. I pushed boldly by him into the house.

"Tell your master that Lord Tissing is here," I said. "I am expected. Do my bidding quickly, fellow," I commanded with a swift glance behind me. I could hear Tissing's step at the very door.

"Yes, my Lord, you are expected," quavered the old man, shuffling away down the hall. "I will announce you to Squire Jaston."

"I will wait here," I answered, glancing quickly around, with my hand on the half-open door, and listening. I heard Tissing's step at the entrance. Leaving the door ajar, I ran swiftly to the staircase, and mounted softly to the second floor as Lord Tissing knocked upon the door.

Listening from the top of the stairs, I heard his impatient excla-



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH.

"Framed by the weather-stained stone casement."

mation because no one answered his knock, and I heard his step in the hall, and the closing of the door. Then I heard another door open and a stealthy step, and a smooth, purring voice said, "Ah! Lord Tissing, good evening. Come this way."

"Good evening, Squire," answered Tissing. "No one came at my knock, and I walked in through the

open door. I was so impatient, he! he!"

"Ah, I understand," replied the Squire. "James saw you coming and left the door open. For he just announced to me that you were here."

"Yes, my dear Squire, I am here. But my heart is in my throat, he! he! How is sweet Doria? I tremble with the delight of saying her name, he! he! Is she obdurate still, or will she turn her adorable eyes upon me? She has never looked fairly at me yet. How can I woo your niece if she will not look at me, he! he?"

"She shall look at you to-night," answered the Squire. "Have you not my word and Sir Henry's? But woo her boldly, man! Women ever like that way."

"'Tis well enough for you and Sir Henry to say woo boldly," replied Tissing petulantly. "You who, if I succeed, win everything, except the girl herself. It is a bad bargain, I say. Why should I not share? I have a mind to give it over. There are other women in the world who would not flout me."

"Ah, but where will you find one like her?" purred the smooth voice of the Squire. "She will be the toast of all London, and you the most envied of all gallants of the town."

"Egad! You are right! What do I care for her property? Take me to her! I would begin my wooing!"

I heard their steps upon the staircase, and I softly retreated. At some distance down the hall I saw light shining through a partly open door. "Her room!" I thought. And instantly my mad plan was made. I would go to her, tell her that I loved her, warn her of the design against her, and then I would stand and defend her against the world. I trusted that she would

remember my face and know me for a friend.

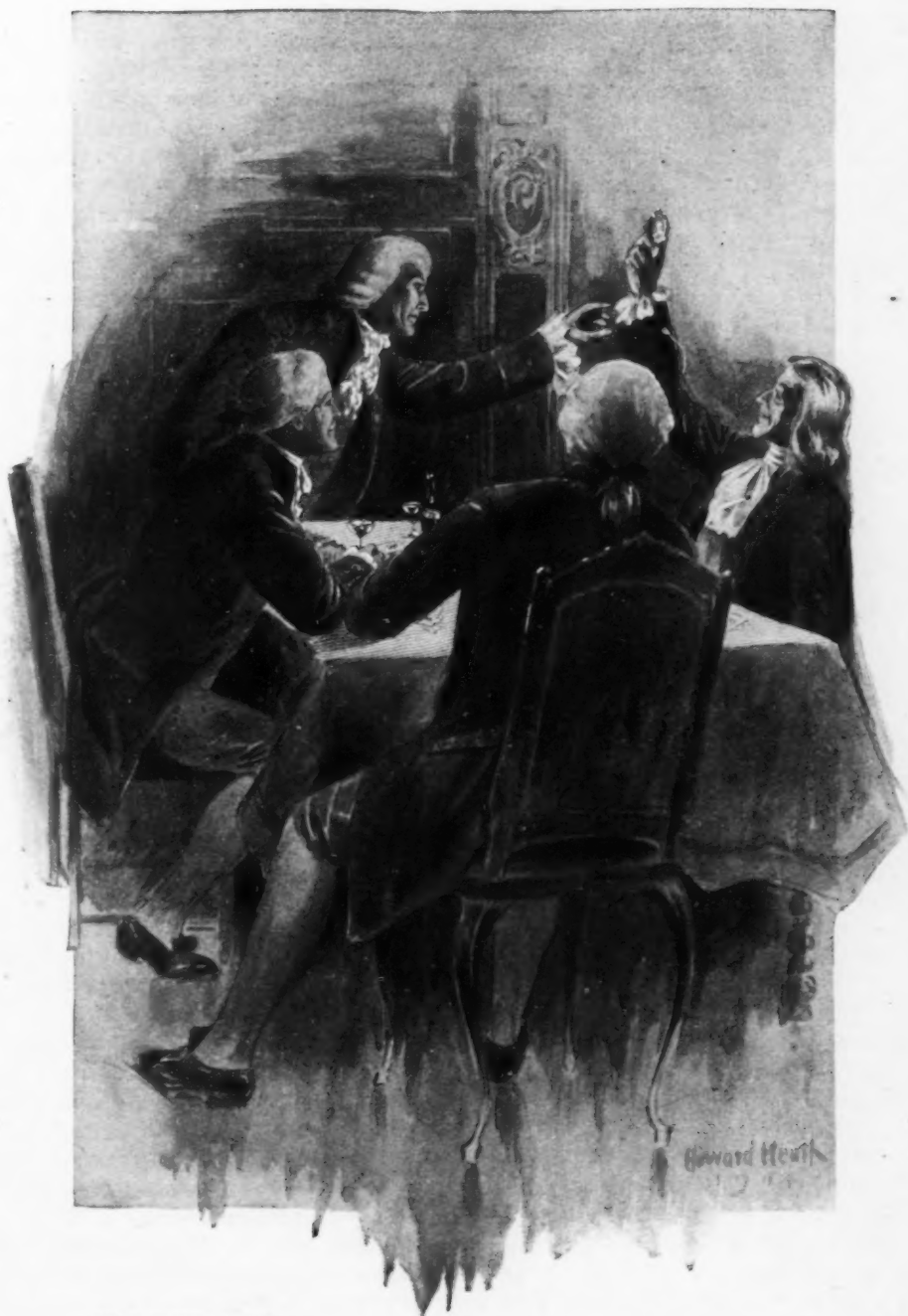
There was not a moment to lose. I heard their steps at the top of the stair. I ran swiftly down the hall and entered the room—my finger on my lips and my right hand raised in warning. The room was empty! She was not there! It was a long room. The light from a candelabra gleamed upon the dark portraits on the walls, and a wide recessed window at the far end was partially concealed by hangings.

I heard the Squire and Tissing coming down the hall, and the Squire's voice said, "Go into this lighted room and wait for me. I will bring Doria to you. It will be a quiet room for your wooing."

I heard Tissing's uncertain step at the door. It was too late to escape. I ran softly down the room and concealed myself behind the hangings of the window as Tissing entered. The hangings were of some diaphanous silken stuff, and, looking through them into the lighted room, I could plainly see Tissing, and note his silly smirk as he preened himself before a mirror. But the hangings made me invisible from the room, for it was dark behind me; and I waited, with my hand upon my sword, for what might come, knowing that I was mad, but knowing that my folly was sweet to me.

Fah! How Tissing sickened me, posing before the mirror and even practicing the attitudes and speeches of a lover! I wanted to spit him on my sword!

Suddenly the sound of footsteps brought him to his feet, and sent the smirk from his face. He was afraid of the sound of her step! I could well see why women scorned him, for they like a manful lover, no matter what they may say. They



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"The face in the miniature was the face of the girl at the window."

love bold wooing, even though they may not love the wooer.

In a moment Doria entered the room with her uncle and once more I saw her dear face and the sweet eyes that lighted the world to me. I waited breathlessly for her to speak—I, who loved her, had never heard her voice! My heart beat hard at the pathetic droop of her lip, and I was glad that I was there, near her, and with my sword in my hand. She looked straight before her, and noticed Tissing not at all.

"Good evening, sweet Doria," said he, bowing before her.

At the sound of his voice her lips became rigid, and the sweetness went out of her eyes.

"Good evening, Lord Tissing," she returned coldly.

The Squire spurred him with a glance.

"Oh, sweet Doria, I love you," cried Tissing. "See me at your feet," and kneeling, he endeavored to kiss her hand.

She drew back suddenly with such a look of repulsion in her face that he rose, stammering, to his feet.

"Do you not see, Doria, that Lord Tissing would kiss your hand?" said the Squire. There was a hard note underlying all the smoothness of his voice.

"I can't, uncle; I can't—let him."

"Oh, I see," he returned with a harsh laugh. "She is shy, my Lord, and would not be wooed in my presence. I will go."

"No! no! uncle," she cried, "do not leave me. Oh, Lord Tissing," she exclaimed passionately, "can you not see? I do not love you! I do not know why my uncle is bent on marrying me to you. I beg of you not to pursue me. Tell my uncle that you do not want a woman who does not love you."

"But I love you, sweet Doria,"

simpered Tissing, "and I am sure you could love me, if you would but look at me. I am not bad looking, they say, he! he!"

At this she did look at him in such a way that the simper faded from his silly mouth, and his face reddened with chagrin.

"Egad! Squire," he cried, "if you want me to wed your niece you may do the rest of the wooing yourself!"

"Be patient, my Lord," answered the Squire. "My dear niece," he went on, "Lord Tissing honors you with his love. He is a gallant gentleman. I wish to see you well married before I die. Why do you refuse him?"

"I do not love him, uncle."

"He will give you great position."

"I do not love him, uncle," she repeated, proudly throwing back her head.

"Pish! girl," exclaimed her uncle, "what is love? The fancy of a school girl! A poet's idle tale! You can feel it as well for one as for another."

"That I cannot," she replied.

"This is nonsense, child. Give me some good reason why you should not wed this gallant gentleman and I will consider it."

Doria looked at her uncle, and I saw her face change, and the light of a sudden, desperate resolution come into her eyes.

"I will give you a good reason," she said. "I cannot marry Lord Tissing because I love—some one else." And at this the red surged into her cheeks. As for me, my heart grew sick within me. For a moment the world stood still.

Then, as in a dream, I heard the Squire's voice say, "Doria, it is not pretty to lie—and you are lying, to put me off. You have met no man whom you could love. I have taken care of that."

"And yet I do love a man," she answered obstinately.

"And does he love you?" asked the Squire.

"I—I—oh—I——" stammered Doria, looking helplessly around.

The Squire regarded her quietly for a moment, as if he were weighing the chances of what he was about to say. Finally he spoke. "Come, now, Doria, I would be fair with you," he said cunningly. "I do not wish to go counter to your love. If you will prove to me that you love some proper man, and that he loves you, and—will tell me his name, I will give over my request that you marry Lord Tissing."

Doria looked helplessly around.

"I—I—cannot," she whispered brokenly.

I saw the look of triumph in the Squire's face.

"If you will tell me his name I will let you choose between him and Lord Tissing," he said.

"I—I—cannot," she stammered.

"You shall, or you shall marry Lord Tissing," he cried. "Choose! I will make you. Would you like your name dragged through the mire? I will give a name to the lover you have invented, and make your words a witness against you, and when I have finished you will be glad to marry any one who will take you to wife. Choose!"

"You would do this?" exclaimed Doria.

"Yes! Choose!" cried the old man.

"You! my uncle!"



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"There in the distance came Lord Tissing."

"Yes! Choose!"

"Lord Tissing," cried Doria, "I have heard to-night that you are a gallant gentleman. I am a helpless girl. Will you see this wrong done me?"

Tissing turned his eyes uneasily away. "I have left my wooing to the Squire," he answered sullenly.

"Cowards!" moaned Doria, half to herself. "Where can I turn?"

"Choose!" came the relentless voice.

"Give me a moment to think," she pleaded.

Her uncle nodded assent, and Doria turned from them, and walking down the room stood just outside the hanging behind which I was concealed. Her face almost touched mine. Her breath was upon my cheek, and her broken words were whispered into my very ear.

"My God! What can I do?" she moaned. "Is there no help anywhere? One weak girl against two strong men! Oh, for one friend! It is not asking much—one friend out of all the world! One man who would let me use his name to shield me to-night and defend me against that drunken fop! My uncle knew I lied, and counted upon it! He knew that no one loves me and that I love no one!"

At this my heart gave a great bound of joy, and I almost cried out.

I heard a dreary little sob, and then Doria whispered on, "No, I—I did not lie. I do love some one!" And she buried her face for a moment in the hanging. "But how can I? I, who have seen him only once, and have never spoken to him? But I do—I do. When I looked down into his face from my window to-day my heart said so against my will. And his eyes told me to trust him, and told me that— Oh, my unknown friend! Tell me how to guess your name out of all the world! Come to me! Help me!" Again she buried her face in the hanging and her voice broke in a piteous little sob.

I put my lips close to her ear. "Doria," I breathed.

She started violently. "My God!" she ejaculated, "am I mad? I heard my name."

"Hush!" I whispered, and I touched her shoulder gently as she swayed against the hanging. "Pre-tend to sob, but listen. I am your friend. The friend you called. I

am here to save you from Lord Tissing. I love you, and I ask you to marry me. My name is Harold Vanning. Shield yourself with it."

"Doria," called the Squire, "Lord Tissing awaits your decision."

"Ask for a moment more," I whispered, and, fumbling in the folds of the hanging, I found one of her little hands and held it close. "Courage," I whispered.

"I—I—give me a moment more, uncle," she stammered. "Oh, just a moment."

"Have it as you will," he answered. "It takes a long time to invent a name, but we will wait," and I felt the note of triumph in his voice.

Doria buried her face in the hanging as if she were weeping. "Did you hear all—I—I said?" she whispered, and I felt her hand flutter in mine.

"Yes," I breathed.

"Oh! oh! you must think me mad! It is pity, not love, that makes you offer me your name."

"By heaven, no!" I ejaculated. "I am here because I love you. Love me or not as you will, but take my name to-night for your defense. To-morrow you shall be free, if you will; but plight your troth to me now, then tell them the name of your betrothed!"

"Doria, we will wait no longer upon your whim," cried the Squire.

"Quick!" I whispered. "Plight me your troth."

"I—I do," she answered softly. "Tell me your name again. I heard only 'Harold.'"

"Harold Vanning," I whispered.

"Well, Doria, have you invented his name?" sneered the Squire.

Doria faced them proudly. "I have not invented it, but I will tell you the name of the man to whom I am betrothed."

"Betrothed!" cried the Squire, falling back a step. Tissing stood mouth agape.

"Yes," she answered.

"His name! Tell his name!" demanded the Squire.

"His name is—Harold Vanning," said Doria, and to me the sound of her voice was like a caress.

"Harold Vanning!" exclaimed the Squire. "You invent boldly, Doria. You do not even know such a man."

"But I do—I do know him," returned Doria, and she lifted her face proudly to meet her uncle's look.

"And he loves you?" exclaimed the Squire.

"He—he says so," she stammered with flushing cheeks. "And I believe him," she added in so low a tone that I could just catch her dear words.

"Then he is a cur!" broke in Lord Tissing.

"He is a gallant gentleman," she cried, "who——"

"A gallant gentleman, forsooth!" exclaimed Tissing. "A gallant gentleman who stood by like a sheep, he! he! when I showed him your miniature, and told him——"

"My miniature!" cried Doria. "How came you by my miniature, sir?"

"I gave it to him," cut in the Squire.

"Oh!" said Doria scornfully.

Tissing reddened at her tone, and lost command of himself. "I say Vanning is a cur!" he blustered loudly. "I showed them all your miniature at the card table to-night, and told them I was coming to woo you, and Vanning sat there like a sheep and said nothing. He—your betrothed! A gallant gentleman, he! he!"

Doria's face flamed at the dastard's words, and then her face became

radiant, as at a sudden thought.

"You told him you were coming here to-night?" she asked softly.

"Yes," answered Tissing, staring.

"I never thought to have anything to thank you for, Lord Tissing," said she, "but I do for this," and her face grew rosy red.

"Who is this Harold Vanning?" asked the Squire.

"A cowardly adventurer, who sits at cards while I woo his betrothed!" cried Tissing.

"A gallant gentleman who will avenge this vile slander on his name!" cried Doria.

"Fah! I would spit him on my sword, were he here," blustered Tissing.

Drawing my sword, I threw aside the hanging. "He is here, Lord Tissing!" I cried.

Tissing gave a shriek of fright as like a woman's, as ever I heard.

"Have at him, Tissing!" cried the Squire. "He has heard our talk, and he must never leave this room!" With that the old man rushed upon me, sword in hand. I did not wish to kill him, and gave back. As the old man lunged at me I stepped aside. His sword passed harmlessly through the air, and stumbling in his wild rush, he pitched forward and struck his head heavily against the corner of a table, and lay still.

I turned upon Tissing, and, by heaven! he had the window up and was shrieking for the Watch. He, a gentleman born, shrieking for the Watch!

"You cur!" I cried, and making for him, I dragged him from the window, and giving him a blow on the head, with the hilt of my sword, sufficient to stun him, I threw him into a corner as I would a dog.

Looking through the window, I saw a rabble crowd gathering in front of the house.

"Quick, Doria!" I exclaimed, opening the door and drawing her into the hall. "Is there a back stairway?"

"Yes, at the rear end of this hall," she answered.

"Await me there," I said, "I will follow in a moment."

She nodded and disappeared down the dark hall.

The rabble had gained access to the house and were rushing up the front stairs.

Swiftly changing the key to the outside of the door, I threw it wide open, and, standing concealed behind it, close to the wall, I cried out, "Help! this way! this way!"

It happened as I thought it would. The crowd, attracted by the light and by my cries, rushed into the room. I did not wait to hear their exclamations at the sight which greeted them, but as the last man entered I slipped nimbly out behind him, slammed and locked the door, and groped my way quickly down the hall, safe from their pursuit.

"Doria," I called softly.

"She is here," answered a voice that I knew. And by the light of a lantern that suddenly showed, I saw Doria with Sir Henry Dest by her side, and behind them three of Sir Henry's men, stout fellows seasoned in many a broil.

I walked boldly up to them.

"Good evening, Sir Henry," I said coolly. "I hope fortune favored you after I left. I would like to discuss the game with you, but I have an engagement with this lady. Come, Doria."

"Is it not rather late for you to take the lady forth?" he asked quietly, barring the way.

"Not if we are betrothed and on our way to be married," I answered calmly.

"Betrothed! On the way to be married! Are you mad? This lady

is betrothed to my cousin, Lord Tissing."

"Ask her," I retorted.

He turned to Doria. "Are you betrothed to this gentleman?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Doria in a low voice.

"Now, Sir Henry, kindly allow us to pass," I said.

"Not so fast," he replied. "This young lady must come back while I inquire of Squire Jaston as to this sudden change in her inclinations. And I am also curious as to the noise I hear. It seems to increase," he added smoothly. And indeed it did, for the crowd in the room, finding themselves locked in, were battering the stout door.

"Well, shall we go back?" he went on quietly, with a significant glance at his men, who stood with weapons drawn awaiting his pleasure.

I considered a moment—four to one. The odds were too great.

"Yes," I replied. "It is your inning, Sir Henry. I will unlock the door."

Sir Henry smiled. "You have a cool head," he said. "I have noted it at cards. And you know when the game is up."

I bowed and bit my lip as if in chagrin. I shall never forget the look of despair in Doria's face as I turned to open the door, upon which the crowd were raining blow after blow.

"Hold!" I cried loudly. "I will open it."

The noise ceased. I stepped forward, and unlocking the door, I threw it wide open, and waving my sword, suddenly cried out to the crowd, "Forward, as you are men, and seize these miscreants who held you prisoners! At them, men! I will look out for the lady."

It was enough. The unreasoning



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

“ ‘He is here, Lord Tissing,’ I cried.”

crowd, infuriated by their confinement, rushed into the hall with cries of rage, and set upon Sir Henry and his followers with pike and cudgel.

"Do not kill them. Capture them!" I cried. "Squire Jaston will reward you."

It was a merry tussle, and I could have laughed to see Sir Henry rolling helpless on the floor, with half a dozen stout fellows hanging to him. But I had no time for laughter. Seizing Doria's hand, we ran down the hall together. As we reached the top of the front stair I looked back, and saw the Squire stagger into the door, holding his hand to his head, and vociferating unintelligible words to the struggling, shouting, victorious crowd. In a moment more we had closed the door of the house behind us.

There was not a moment to lose. As soon as the Squire got a hearing, the crowd would be at our heels. A carriage drove up to the house as we appeared in the door, and the footman, at the sight of us, jumped down and opened the carriage door.

I heard a hoarse shout behind us. The Squire had made them understand. We could never escape on foot.

"The carriage! It is our only chance!" I whispered to Doria. The footman's mistake was our opportunity.

I led Doria straight to the carriage and handed her in.

"You are late," said I, at a venture, to the footman.

"I am sorry, my Lord," he answered. "We missed the house."

"Drive fast, now," I ordered, getting in with a quick backward glance at the house.

The carriage went rapidly down the street.

Doria clung trembling to my arm.

"Where are we going?" she whispered.

"I don't know," I answered, "but we can't be worse off than we were. When the carriage stops we must act quickly."

After ten minutes' rapid driving the carriage drew up before a large building, and the footman ran up the steps and knocked upon the door.

"Quick, Doria!" I whispered, drawing her from the carriage. "This is our chance," and seizing her hand, I started to run down the dark street. I felt Doria pull back.

"Wait! Look!" she exclaimed. The door had opened in response to the footman's knock, and a sweet-faced nun stood in the entrance. I looked at Doria, and with one accord we turned and walked up the steps.

The nun gazed at Doria in surprise. "I expected to see Lady Mary Malson," said she.

I cut in boldly. "We came in Lady Malson's carriage by a strange chance. You see before you a helpless girl who asks refuge for to-night."

"All such are welcome here. Come in, my child."

Doria turned to me. Her lip quivered. "What can I say to you?" she asked softly.

I turned to the nun. "We love each other, Sister. We are betrothed. We are to be married in the morning."

Then I turned to Doria. "Say this, Doria. Say this," I besought her. "Tell the Sister that this is true."

The nun put her arm about Doria, and drew her gently into the house. "There is no need to tell me, child," she said, "I can read it in your face."

Heroic Measures

BY JULIA TRUITT BISHOP

Dixon Merideth stalked grimly down the steps of the bathing pavilion, glaring frowningly at the hired bath-suit in which he had just arrayed himself, and which was fashioned after its kind. If it had not been that he was a stranger in a strange land he would not have ventured further in such an abomination; but here he was protected by his utter loneliness. Wherefore he walked slowly and serenely across the sandy beach, toward the shrieking and laughing crowd who were disporting themselves in the waves. As he went, the red afterglow of sunset was upon them; but just as the first wavelet broke over his feet the garlands of electric lights above the bathing space flashed out upon the darkening water. The sudden flare brought out his face and figure with a cameolike clearness, and—this is a small world after all—some one rushed at him and seized his hand.

"Hello, Dick!" whispered an eager, excited voice. "Didn't know you were within a thousand miles! The very man I want! Help me out, Dick—I'll do as much for you, some day—there they are, coming down the steps—no, on the ladies' side, idiot—a young one and an old one—I'll introduce you. Hold on to the old one half an hour, Dick, if you love me, and give me a chance to say three words to Elise. Come along, stupid! What are you hanging back for?"

Mr. Merideth had stiffened in a manner which was totally at variance with the hired bath-suit.

"Perhaps when you recover your mind, Tom," he said coldly, "you

will be good enough to tell me what you want me to do."

"Didn't I say for you to hold on to her?" whispered Tom in desperation. "Hold on to her, I tell you—do anything but drown her—though I've been tempted to do even that sometimes. Oh—Miss Lansing, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Dick. Miss Elise, this is Dick."

Having accomplished which incoherent introduction, Tom Weathersby dropped back casually with Elise, the pretty girl whom no hired bath-suit could make anything but lovely, and winked and nodded frowningly in the direction of the elderly lady whom Nature had endowed with a surplus of flesh, at the same time that she gave her a stern and domineering expression which should have gone with angles. Thus adjured, his unwilling friend moved to the side of Miss Lansing. It did not need the aid of a sixth sense to tell him that Tom and his pretty partner were beginning a furtive motion toward the left, crabwise.

"The water's awfully rough! I don't believe that we'd better go in, after all!" gasped Miss Lansing, whom a wave had just slapped merrily, splashing up to her face and filling her eyes with brine. Dixon took her arm gently but firmly.

"It's all the more fun when it's rough," he said cheerfully, glancing sidewise at Tom and Elise, who were making a wide circuit toward the furthest rope. "You are not used to sea-bathing, are you? Just look straight ahead, and when a wave is almost here, jump as high as you can. I'll help you. You are quite safe with me. There—you should

have jumped, as I told you. Never mind—it won't hurt to swallow a little salt water."

"Where is Elise?" gurgled Miss Lansing, blind and gasping. "Elise! We must get out of this at once. Come right out—at once I say——"

Dixon set her on her feet again.

"You see, you won't watch for the waves," he said soothingly. "This water's pretty salt, isn't it? But they say it's good for the eyes. No—don't turn that way. If you turn your back you'll be knocked under—and then I'm not always sure of finding you again."

Dixon was beginning to take an interest in his work. As long as he had begun, it was worth doing well.

Miss Lansing kept her eyes wave-ward, but she still shrieked brokenly, "Elise! Do you hear me? We are coming out!"

"They were right behind us a few moments ago," said Dixon truthfully. "It would seem a little selfish to make them come out when they have just begun to enjoy themselves, wouldn't it? Tell you what—we'll go on to that first rope. It's no end of fun to hold to the rope and jump when you see a wave coming—That's right! You didn't jump quite high enough, but you're learning."

"I'm not going to the rope!" spluttered the panting and amazed and indignant Miss Lansing. "I'm going out! Didn't you hear me say I was going out?"

Dixon stalked steadily on rope-wards, a firm grasp on his captive's arm.

"No, I don't think it would be advisable to go out any further than this first rope," he said. "You see, you're not very tall—and these waves *are* pretty high. There—get hold of that, now. There she comes! Jump! Now, isn't that comfy?"

Miss Lansing was swinging to the

rope with a fierce grip that was suggestive of calamity. The wave had unsettled her white bath-cap, which hung rakishly over one ear. Just beyond the rope a pair of feet, modestly black-stockinged, kicked and plunged aimlessly. Dixon stared straight ahead.

"This is the finest surf-bathing I have had in a long time," he said reflectively. "The beach is the best in the South, people say. There—did you see how I lifted you over that wave, rope and all? You are beginning to enjoy it now, aren't you? Never mind calling for Miss Elise. She won't hear you. They are away over there at that furthest rope. But don't be uneasy—Tom swims like a fish. There—jump again! Now, honestly, isn't this a lot of fun?"

"I'm—drowning!" gurgled the lady faintly. "I—can't—get my feet down!"

And in proof of this statement the feet made another wild demonstration in the direction of the electric lights.

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Miss Lansing's escort with cheerful assurance. "I'm teaching you to float. You know, after you've learned this, no matter if there's an accident while you're at sea, you can float around until some one rescues you.—Up you go again! This is great, isn't it?"

"Elise!" shrieked Miss Lansing desperately, kicking with frantic energy. "I must get to Elise! There she is—out there—alone with that man——"

"People can't be said to be alone with two or three hundred other people in their immediate vicinity," said Dixon, with the patient air of one trying to explain to a child. "Besides, why shouldn't they be alone? Elise is twenty. If Tom loves her, why shouldn't he have a

chance to tell her so? Say—look out! Here comes a mountain!"

The mountain passed and left Miss Lansing swinging helpless and Dixon standing serene.

"He shall not! He sha'n't!" shrieked the lady, with more frantic plunges. "I'll call for help. I will not allow it!"

"If you call for help, people will laugh at you," cautioned Dixon. "And I'm sure it's too late for you to say that he shall not, and you will not allow it. I know Tom very well. He has said his say long ago. And if I'm any judge of a girl's face, she has told him yes. I wasn't quite quick enough that time—that wave was rather damp, wasn't it?"

"I'd like to know what concern of yours——" she began as soon as she could speak, "I'd like to know what you have to say about the future of my niece!"

The young man took her up as if she had been a child, and set her upon her feet.

"What concern is it of mine?" he asked, his face whitening with some strong emotion. "You spoiled Dorothy's life, and mine, five years ago—why should you interfere with the happiness of everybody that comes your way? You didn't recognize me in this regalia, did you? I don't blame you. And Tom was so excited that he introduced me as his friend Dick, which is a little misleading. Never mind—it is all over but the heartache, so far as Dorothy and I are concerned—and no doubt she has forgotten me by this time—

but Tom Weathersby is worthy of any girl, and he shall have Elise if I have to steal her away myself.—I see Tom and Elise are coming in. Shall we meet them on the beach?—Just give me both your hands. They are pretty hands, Miss Lansing. Some man would have been made very happy if you had given him one of them long ago—and then Dorothy and I would never have been parted.—That's right! Why, this surf is really nothing to you!—Well, Tom, it was fine, wasn't it?"

"Oh, great!" answered Tom with conviction. He and Elise stood there, blushing, quite unconscious that they were still hand in hand.

"Elise!" commanded Miss Lansing in a voice that was much shaken. "I am surprised! Come with me at once—and don't look so—so insanely satisfied."

They started off, Elise following her meekly; but the next moment Miss Lansing came back and laid one of the pretty hands on Dixon's arm.

"You don't deserve anything—you tried to drown me," she said, her lips trembling. "But Dorothy is up yonder in the pavilion—and I don't think she has forgotten."

Miss Lansing stood still for a moment, looking after the man who rushed up the stairs to the dressing-room, three steps at a time. The salt-water was in her eyes as she turned away.

"Come on, Elise," she said, more kindly than she had ever spoken. "You young lovers think all the world was made for you, don't you?"

Lady Lydia's Lesson

BY REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

"Women," said I, "are compounded by the simplest formula: They are one part good looks and one part good luck."

"And men," retorted Lady Lydia, "are one half bad manners and one half bad morals. It is the former component that I find particularly obnoxious."

We were sitting in the famous blue drawing-room of the Dunstables' town-house. The afternoon "at home" was over and I had remained, as usual, for one more cup of tea and another fifteen minutes' contemplation of Lady Lydia's blonde prettiness.

"You must not judge all men—and especially all Americans—by Taylor Lansing," I answered.

Seeing that she seemed to think herself in love with Taylor—although she supposed that nobody but Taylor guessed it—this was rather a bold shot. But Lady Lydia is not so hairbrained in her talk as in her affections and she accordingly now took me with a calm aloofness that would have turned a realistic novelist green with envy.

"Mr. Lansing," she said, with just the slightest elevation of her serene eyebrows, "has excellent manners."

"But not so many of them," I insisted, "as to crowd out the other component."

Indeed, Taylor's manners were worse in his absence than when he was present, for just then he interrupted, by note, a most promising conversation. I knew the letter was one of Taylor's the moment she so eagerly took it from the servant, for his writing was sufficiently familiar. As a senior at college, I had been

commissioned to look after the lad when he was a freshman, and only two months ago his mother—the most charming young widow in New York, where there are so many charming young widows—had sent me to London to "see what was the trouble with him, anyhow."

"The trouble" was Lady Lydia. The boy, who had quite forgotten to return for his junior year at college, was simply mad about her, and, so far as he was concerned, Lady Lydia's mental condition seemed little better.

Of course they were only a pair of young fools. Taylor's father had made the American mistake of leaving the lad with a fortune in his own right, but Taylor was by no means a vicious boy, in spite of the bad character I had tried to give him to her Ladyship. In fact, his only dangerous passion had thus far been for cards. He would give up almost anything for them and, as he was a hilarious loser, he had been having a purple time of it abroad under the fond delusion that he was Americanizing England with the Yankee game—an apostle "teaching" the gospel of poker to half the clubs in London. But in the meantime he had chanced to meet Lady Lydia and then he had developed that strain of Quixotism—it was nothing more—which now threatened his downfall.

For Lady Lydia also had ideals. A nice little fly-away thing, there were possibilities for any amount of good in her if she could only somehow be thoroughly scared into improving them. She had been riotously in love with her rich husband at the time of their marriage three years before, but Sir Henry—

a splendid, big, honest Englishman and younger brother to the bachelor Earl of Drumore—had lately felt the British call to Parliament. Then, as he had been giving about all his time to politics, his wife refused to see that he would recover from all that sort of thing after his first experience and she therefore chose to think herself neglected.

To this equation add the lure of youth on the one hand and the lure of title on the other, and you have—Taylor's letter.

Lady Lydia begged my pardon and read it. And just then Sir Henry entered, fresh from the House.

"Hello, Mallard!" he said.

"Hello," said I—but I was watching Lady Lydia.

She had finished the note, but it was still in her hands when he came in, and I saw that she flushed a little, that she put her hand behind her, and that then, as Sir Henry turned toward her, she somehow dropped it.

Her back was toward me, and—well, I picked it up.

I not only picked it up; I concealed it in the readiest pocket of my coat.

Five minutes later I was in the street with that confounded letter confronting my scrupulous soul. I may have been all wrong about it—I never before read a letter which I was not intended to read and I fervently hope that never again may I be placed in a position where the perusal of one presents even a question for debate—but I knew by the way in which Lady Lydia had tried to conceal this note that there had at last arrived in Taylor's affair the climax which I had been dreading. Therefore, telling myself that here—to Taylor, to his mother, to Sir Henry and, not least of all, to Lady

Lydia herself—was a duty which overrode ordinary conventions, I took the letter from its envelope.

Considering the writer's youth and ardor, it was ominously brief:

"If, then, it must end," wrote Lansing. "it would better end at once. The Army Debate is going on and the House will sit late to-night. Pack what you must in a satchel and, at a quarter to eleven, get into the cab which will draw up at your door. I shall be inside of it."

So it had come at last! The fools, the little fools!

But would she do it? Had that poor little heart of hers the red blood which such a thing as this required? I didn't know, but, at any rate, it was no time to take chances. I must act, and at once, if only for the sake of my future peace of mind.

But what to do? To go to Sir Henry was obviously out of the question. To go to either of the principals would be only to get myself into a new trouble and, at most, only to postpone their old one. Instead, I went to a steamship booking-office and engaged passage for two persons to New York by the boat due to sail next morning.

Then I wrote a note to Lady Lydia.

"Here," I said, "is a letter which you dropped this afternoon. I picked it up, but Sir Henry grew interesting and until now I have forgotten to return it to you."

That dispatched by a lagging Mercury, I went to the Brougham Club, where Taylor was putting up, and, as good luck would have it, met in the smoking-room the very man I was looking for, Major Trevis, of "The Browns."

"Major," said I, "did you ever play with marked cards?"

I knew that, if he could help it, he never played with any other kind,

and I was therefore quite prepared for the torrent of righteous indignation with which he greeted my inquiry, and this I interrupted to make myself clear.

"One moment, Major," I pursued. "I was afraid you hadn't, and yet, to save three people from disgrace, I have got to find, before another hour, some one who has played, and will play again, with marked cards."

With that he grew more curious and in a short time I had hooked him and three friends of his, all of his own stripe. Of course, to secure their irreproachable honor, I had to draw up a paper, stating some of the facts of the case—without the mention of names—but, that done, the coast was cleared just as Taylor Lansing, his boyish face aglow, brushed by us from the café.

"No," he insisted. "I can't play to-night. I'd love to, but I can't, really. Got a—an—er—engagement of importance."

"For what hour?"

"For ten-forty-five."

A chorus of suggestive comments greeted this declaration, but out of the midst of them, before the lad's temper had half a chance to assert itself, the Major came to the front like the old soldier that he was.

"Nonsense," he bellowed, "it's only half after eight now! You have hours ahead of you, and you deserve a revenge from us, anyhow. Play, man, and we'll quit at a quarter after ten."

Lansing hesitated.

"Make it ten sharp?" he asked—and was lost.

For I had instructed John, the waiter for the room in which they always played, to keep the clock an hour behind time until I should return.

Then I quietly dropped out of sight and, a few minutes before ten-

forty-five, drove up in a cab to the door of the Dunstables' town-house.

On the instant that front door opened and, as I turned my face away for fear of a too sudden recognition, a heavily draped figure veritably hurdled into the seat beside me.

According to instructions, the jehu immediately lashed his horses into a gallop and I turned to begin my lecture on *The Whole Duty of Matrimony*, by a Bachelor thereof.

"Hello!" cried the bundle. "You're not Lord George! Who the devil are you, anyway?"

I never think of that remark without priding myself upon my armor against surprise.

"I might," I said, "reply in the role of Echo, if that voice hadn't given you away. I am glad that you saw fit to make use of my humble equipage, Sir Henry."

"God bless my soul! Why, it's—it's Tallard!"

I had only the vaguest notion of what he might do to me, or what horrible thing had happened, but safety for us all lay only in calm.

"And may I be permitted to ask, Sir Henry," I blandly pursued, "what is the cause of all this emotion?"

The fine old giant never even paused to counter with a question about my sudden and untimely appearance, but instead gave me an answer with a splendid frankness.

"No offense, old chap, no offense! And I do owe you an apology, that's a fact. Stop the cab. The truth is that Lady Dunstable's rather out of sorts.—Ha, ha! Not quite fit, you know.—I'm afraid I've been too wrapped up in my politics to notice it—the more shame to me. And, as I got home just now, she told me she wanted to run down to my brother's, Lord George's, place in Brecknockshire for a month or two. She

insisted on our taking the half-after-ten train. I telephoned to George and he replied that he would come right around himself and go with me to the station where Lady Lydia is to meet us. So, when your trap came by, I naturally thought——"

But I didn't now care what he had thought.

"And you are going, too?" I asked.

"To be sure I am."

"But what about the House?"

"Oh, well, we got through the Army Bill Debate and won on a division an hour ago and——. Fact is, I've been giving a deuced deal more of my time and attention lately to that sort of thing than I am going to give in the future. I rather imagine the House will have to take care of itself hereafter.—Won't you and young Lansing run down to Drumore House day after to-morrow for the week-end?"

"We'd like to, I'm sure, Sir Henry, but business has suddenly called us both home."

He slapped me heartily on the shoulder.

"Well," he laughed, "George is

an ideal elder brother, a confirmed bachelor, you know. So if you're back about this time next year you'll be just in time for the christening of the heir to the title."

At that I wrung his hand in very earnest.

"With all my heart," I answered. "Meanwhile, Lansing and I sail to-morrow."

And we did sail, too.

Nor was it an altogether unpleasant voyage, for Taylor's depression was of a very healthy sort and, as there was a pretty little republican from Cheyenne aboard, he soon came to understand even my course of action.

But I had told him only as much as I thought it good for him to know, and so he never quite understood one remark which I let fall just as the big arm of the Goddess of Liberty arose ahead and welcomed us home.

"Women," said I, "are compounded by the simplest formula: They are one part good looks and nine-hundred and ninety-nine parts good luck."



The Beau and the Burglar

BY WILBUR D. NESBIT

Pilneyville is one of these little towns that nestle among the hills, if you want to be real sentimental when you describe it; and it is one of these towns that haven't life enough to climb the hills, if you don't care what you say.

Pilneyville is, and has been for fifty years, the home of Eleazar Pilney, who is the father of Constance Pilney. Eleazar is a short, stout man, with a paint-brush beard and the manner of one who is perfectly willing to let you impose upon him—a manner which he has acquired in forty years of contact and conflict with the natives of Pilneyville. At ten he began swapping jackknives with his playmates; at fifteen he was trading horses; at twenty he was making not a few dickers in real estate; and after that he confined himself mostly to shaving notes and taking mortgages on farms that he did not care to buy, but which he wanted to own some day.

The town was named in honor of his grandfather, as was Eleazar. Really, there is not so much need of going into detail about him, only that it will serve to emphasize the difference between him and his daughter Constance, who is one of the prettiest girls that ever went to college and played havoc with the impressionable heart of so fine a young man as Mercator Hubble. She is so pretty that it only took about fifteen minutes for her to convince her father that it would be perfectly lovely to have Mercator Hubble come to Pilneyville to visit them during the time she was home for a vacation.

"What do you want him to visit us for, Connie?" asked Eleazar,

pulling at his paint-brush beard. "He isn't any kin of ours."

"I know. But he has been so very, very nice to me."

"Well, where did he get such a name as Mercator? Is he named after the man that made that whopperjawed map of the world they used to have in the geographies?"

"No. He was named for his grandfather, and says he doesn't know where his grandfather got the name."

This established a preliminary bond of sympathy between Mercator and Eleazar. The latter had never been overly fond of his first name, especially because of the fact that when he was a boy the other boys would make various ribald rhymes in which they dwelt upon the similarity between "Eleazar" and "geezer."

"Mr. Hubble's friends always call him Merc," Constance explained.

"But what on earth do you want him to come a-visiting for? Are you going to marry him?"

Whereat Constance blushed demurely and said, "Why, the idea!"

So she wrote to Mercator Hubble and asked him to come to Pilneyville for the week, and the young man came gladly. Eleazar Pilney met him at the station with the family carriage, and drove him to the house, Constance sitting on the rear seat with him and chattering gayly about the young folks in the college town, while Eleazar solemnly pointed out the First Baptist Church, the First Methodist Church, the Town Hall, the Carnegie library, the Herald office and the place where the patent medicine man was arrested for breaking off two of Judge Sharp's teeth while attempting to extract them, free, without pain.

"Judge didn't care so much about the pain, so long as it was free," explained Eleazar, "but when the fellow broke off his teeth and the crowd laughed, he grabbed the fellow by the shoulder and committed him for contempt of court, assault and battery, malpractice and disorderly conduct."

"Judge Sharp gets his title because he is a notary public," Constance remarked. "He is also the town constable, so you would best be careful how you conduct yourself while here, Mr. Hubble."

"'Mister'?" said Eleazar, twisting himself about. "Thought you said his friends all called him Merc, Connie."

Hubble's heart jumped spasmodically, and maybe hers did, too; but she covered her confusion by calling their attention to the beautiful sunset. After that she did not make any more interpolations when her father made his running comments on the scenes they passed, and when they reached the house she hurried in ahead of them to see that supper was being properly prepared.

That evening they sat out on the broad veranda until about eleven o'clock; then Eleazar announced that he must be piling into bed, as he had to get out early in the morning and drive to the county line to look at a



DRAWN BY W. J. ENRIGHT

"Where did he get such a name as Mercator?"

farm. He offered to take Hubble along, but Constance said that she had planned a drive for the afternoon and the day would be too quiet for her if she were left alone.

"Well, Mr. Hubble, I'll show you to your room, if you're sleepy," Pilney offered. Hubble was tired, and said so, and after a good-night to Constance, followed Eleazar up the old-fashioned stairway and down the hall to his room. Earlier in the evening he had been telling Pilney about his safety razor, and now he offered to exhibit it. He opened his grip and produced the instrument; then, while Pilney was admiring it, Hubble took his clothing out. Suddenly he turned with an expression of annoyance.

"What's wrong?"

Eleazar asked.

"If I haven't packed my grip without putting in my pajamas—my night clothes!"

"Don't let that worry you. Give you one o' my night shirts. Little roomy for you in the chest and maybe tolerably scant in the legs, but it'll be comfortable."

Mercator Hubble had turned out the lamp, and, not feeling particularly inclined for sleep after all, was sitting by the window, which

opened on a porch roof running around two sides of the house. He was enjoying the moonlighted view across the valley, and puffing a cigar meditatively. Give a man moonlight and a cigar, let him be in the house where is the girl he thinks is the queen of them all, and he will inevitably wish he had been born a poet. Mercator Hubble was romancing mentally, when to his ears there came a scraping sound. It was as if some one were clambering up one of the posts of the veranda. It was soft, as if its author were being very careful with his feet, and there came along with it the faint rustle of vines that were being shoved aside so that the hands of the man might obtain a good grip on the post.

"Burglars!" muttered Hubble, biting his cigar in two.

"This is my cue to be a hero. I couldn't ask a better chance than this to win the favor of the old man and cement the affection of Constance."

While he was rapidly thinking out his plans for the capture of the burglar he had reached over to his grip, which lay open on the floor, taken out his revolver, and cautiously crept from the window to the roof. The burglar was climbing a post around the corner from him; so, pressing against the wall of the building, he walked quietly in that direction. When he reached the corner he stopped and crouched, revolver in hand. The porch-climber, with stifled grunts, was pulling himself over the tin guttering. Hubble waited until he heard the sigh of relief which proclaimed that the man was at last on the roof, then he calmly walked around the corner.

"G-great Scott!" gasped the burglar. "G-ghosts!"

It is calculated to upset the nerves of even the most hardened of bur-

glarious practitioners to come unexpectedly upon an apparition in a long, balloon-like garment which flutters and flaps in the breeze. It still further upsets his equanimity if this apparition jerks up its right hand and pokes a huge revolver into his face and hisses:

"Not a word. Not a word above a whisper or I'll blow you clear across the road!"

"I'm not going to make no speech, Mister," breathed the other.

"Come around this corner, then."

The burglar obeyed, crawling along on hands and knees, from which position he had not risen since he edged over the gutter. Mercator Hubble was again thinking rapidly, and acting as he thought. It would never do to have any outcry or loud noise. That would awaken and alarm Constance, and then she and her father would come running, and possibly the burglar would shoot; even if Hubble got in a shot at him first, there remained the possibility of his wounding one of the others before he could be mastered. He would get the man around to his side of the house and then decide what to do with him. The burglar obediently came to Hubble's window, his captor standing over him all the while, with the weapon pointed at his head. The fellow was looking up at the revolver in fright. As a precaution, Hubble bent over him and took from his hip pocket a horse pistol which had been causing it to bulge.

Now, you may sit up," Hubble said. The man obeyed.

"I've landed you," Hubble continued, "and the next question is, what am I going to do with you?"

"Let me go; that's a good feller," suggested the law-breaker.

"That won't do. I'm going to



DRAWN BY W. J. ENRIGHT

“Not a word above a whisper or I’ll blow you clear across the road!”

take you to the lock-up and turn you over to the jailer."

"No good, sport. The lock-up's like the saloon. It closes at eleven o'clock and the constable goes home."

"You seem pretty well acquainted with the place," Hubble retorted, still maintaining his whisper.

"Ought to be. I live here."

"Well, I'll just make you lead me to the home of the constable and we'll wake him up and make him put you in a cell."

"You'll be a fine sight, walking down town in that circus tent of a night shirt."

Hubble started. He had not thought of that. Still, the difficulty could be overcome. He could not leave his prize and go through the window to get his clothes, but he could do one thing—he could make the burglar supply the lack in his costume. He brought both weapons up until they whisked the end of the burglar's nose.

"Take off your trousers," he ordered.

"What?"

"Take off your trousers. They'll about fit me."

"Look here, stranger. This comes pretty near being highway robbery."

"Get them off. We'll see who looks funny going down town."

Sorrowfully, the burglar obeyed instructions. Hubble seized the garment in his left hand, slipped his revolver into a pocket of the trousers, then awkwardly wriggled his left leg into them. Transferring the horse pistol to his left hand, he repeated the performance with his right. The burglar waited, wondering, in his coat and underwear.

"Shin over that gutter, and down the post in front of us," was the next command.

"But you're barefooted, Mr.

Detective," snickered the burglar.

"That's all right, too. I can stand it to walk."

Hubble followed the man to the edge of the roof. They sat down, with their feet hanging over. The man was estimating his chances of making a run for it when he touched the ground; Hubble was anticipating his satisfaction in returning to the house and informing Mr. Pilney that the burglar had been stopped, caught, locked up and was awaiting his pleasure.

"Who's out there?" came in a low feminine voice from around the corner.

Hubble jabbed the horse pistol under the ear of the burglar and scowled fearfully. "Don't breathe!" he whispered. The man shivered and drew his head away. Hubble kept the muzzle against him and the fellow sat, wry-necked and unhappy.

"Is that you, Merc?" came in the same voice.

"Yes," Hubble answered, soberly.

"What are you doing on the roof?"

"Oh, nothing. Just climbed out here to smoke and enjoy the view." He glared wickedly at the individual who formed the view.

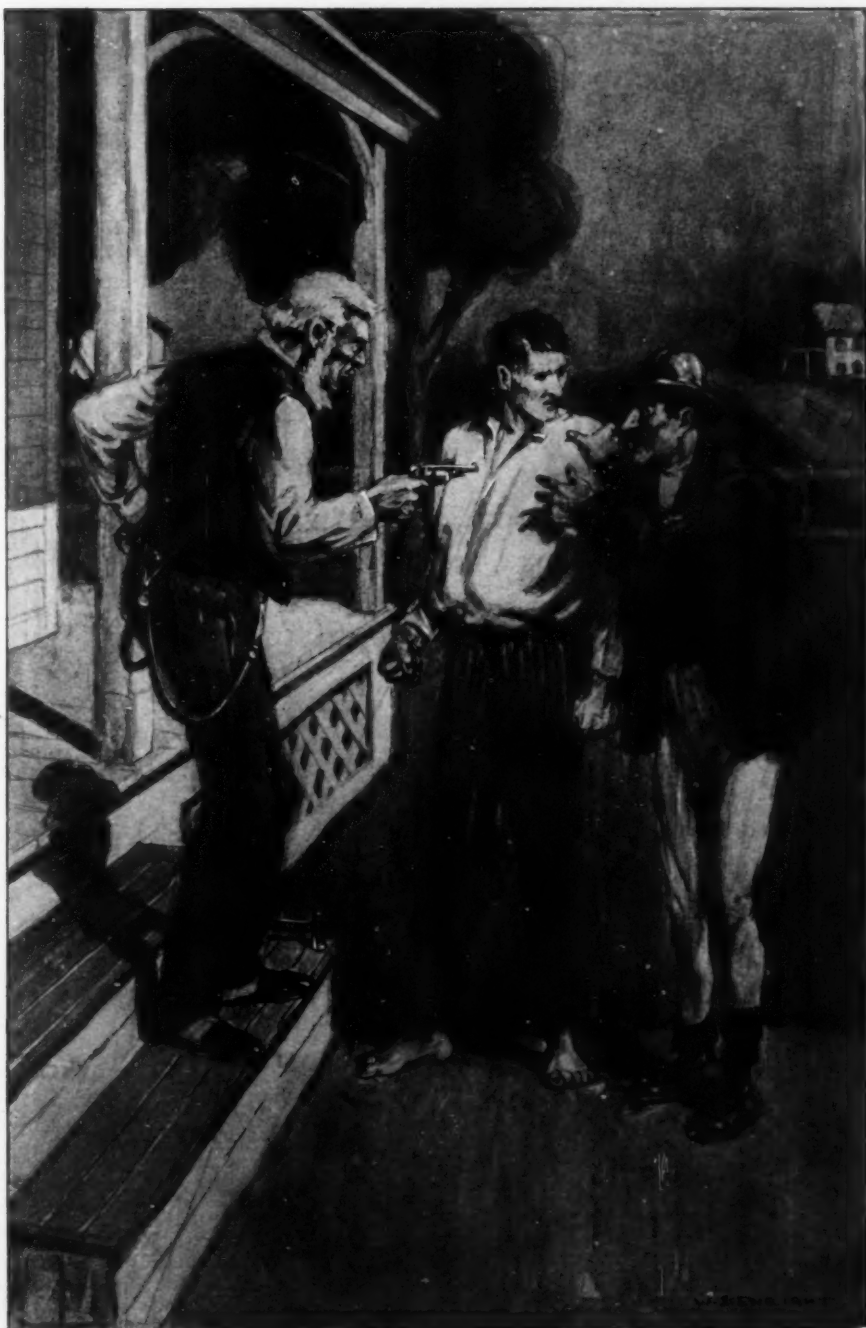
"I hadn't retired yet; had sat up to read. I believe I will come out there and talk with you while you smoke. It will be such fun!"

The burglar grinned; Hubble poked him viciously with the gun and he subsided.

"No, don't come out, please. The—the roof is slippery."

"Why, it doesn't seem so from here. Where are you? At your window?"

"Yes. I—I had just thrown my cigar away and was about to go to bed. Don't come out. You might catch cold. Good night. I'm going off the roof."



DRAWN BY W. J. ENRIGHT

" 'He's got a gun in his pocket,' interrupted Migley."

"Well, I think you are terribly unconcerned! But, good night."

When she said "unconcerned," the burglar clapped his hand over his mouth and his eyes fairly shouted. Hubble vented his wrath by stabbing his neck vigorously with the cold muzzle again. After he heard Constance's window slide down, he turned to the man and indicated the veranda post with the barrel of the horse pistol. Slowly the fellow let himself over the edge of the roof and slid down the post. Hubble followed him quickly and was at his side almost as soon as they struck the ground.

"Now, you amble along with me to the jail," he ordered. "Take me to the constable's house. Is he the Judge Sharp I have heard about?"

"Yes," growled the man.

"Then he lives in that little yellow house at the foot of the next hill. You hustle along and we'll soon get you a room for the night."

The burglar slouched glumly out of the side gate, and the odd procession was on—the burglar, in upper garments, with his shivering legs protected from the night air only by his balbriggans; and Hubble, a grotesque figure in a pair of trousers that were too small for him, topped by a blouse-like shirt, which sagged roomily before and behind.

"Now, you call the judge out," commanded Hubble.

He and his prisoner were standing in the yard before the little yellow cottage. The captive had been thinking during the march to that point, and he had evolved a plan that was no less daring and subtle than the one which had resulted in his undoing on the roof of the Pilney porch. He glanced shrewdly at Hubble.

"Oh, Judge! Judge Sharp!" he called.

An upstairs window opened and a head was put out.

"What's wanted? Who's there?"

"It's me, Tom Migley."

"What d'ye want, Tom?"

"Got a man for ye to put in jail."

"Well, by ginger, that's a change for you!"

The head went back, the window went down, and after a few moments the judge, showing that he had dressed hastily, came stamping down his front steps.

"Where's your man?" he asked.

"Got your gun?" inquired Migley, cautiously.

"You bet. Reckon I know my business."

"Here's the man," said Hubble.

"Yes, here he is," exclaimed Migley, clapping his hand on Hubble's shoulder. "I caught him climbing on Eleazar Pilney's porch roof, and nabbed him and brought him here."

"Good boy!" cried the judge. "Stranger, you're in a bad fix."

"He's a liar," hotly said Hubble.

"I caught him myself. Why, I've got his—"

"He's got a gun in his pocket," interrupted Migley. Judge Sharp pointed his revolver at Hubble.

"Move a finger, you desperado, an' I'll blow daylight plumb through you! Tom, take his arms away from him."

Hubble had to submit. In his excitement, Migley got only the horse pistol, which was in a hip pocket, the revolver having been slipped into a side pocket.

"But this man is deceiving you, Judge," argued Hubble. "My name is Mercator Hubble, and I am visiting the Pilneys. I heard this fellow climbing up the post of the veranda and captured him, and made him bring me here."

"Likely story, young man. Likely

story. But it don't go with me. I'm too old a bird to be caught with such chaff, even if I am a country jake. I've heard o' you villainous city criminals before. Scoot along, an' we'll register you at the calaboose."

Judge Sharp, being in *negligée* attire himself, and having his official dignity to maintain as well, had not paid particular attention to the clothing of the two. He ranged himself on one side of Hubble, seized his arm, and said to Migley:

"Tom, I deppytize you. Grab this prisoner and help me arrest him."

Migley pinched the other arm, and the three went down the quiet street to the lock-up. There Judge Sharp struck a match and lighted a lamp.

"Now," he began. "I'll just put you—Well, what in thunderation! Tom, where's your pants?"

"He's got 'em on," answered Migley. "He was sneakin' around in his night clothes an' he held me up an' made me give 'em to him before I could get the drop on him an' take him in tow."

Judge Sharp whirled to Hubble and shook his fist menacingly in his face.

"Of all the condemned, high-handed, cold-blooded outrages I ever heard tell of, this beats 'em all hollow!" he roared. "Here you come a-rampaging into our peaceful town an' conduct your campaign o' felony with malicious prepen—yes, sir, by thunder! It's outrageous!"

"Malice prepen, I suppose you mean, Judge," replied Hubble, who was now at the calm white heat of anger.

"Don't you dare to throw any insinuations at me, you scalawag! You'll get ten years for what you've already done, an' if you don't keep your mouth shut you'll get—"

"I'll get thirty days for contempt of court, will I?" was the sarcastic interruption, suggested by the fact that when the judge's mouth opened a yawning cavity showed where the painless dentist had assailed the judicial dignity of the mainstay of the legal profession of Pilneyville.

"Goldarn ye, you'll get a good an' plenty before I'm through with ye!"

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I'm a-goin' to clap you into the cooler so quick it'll make your head swim. Come on."

"Hold on, Judge," interposed Migley. "I want my pants."

"Give 'em to him," decreed the judge.

"Not in a hundred years," asserted Hubble. "I don't want to resist an officer—"

"An' it's dadgummed well ye don't!"

"I don't want to resist an officer, but I'm going to keep these trousers on until I get mine. If you think I'm a burglar, why don't you go up to Pilney's and get my outfit?"

"I'll do it. You get into that cell, and—"

"Not until you have investigated my story. I say I caught this man—Migley, you call him—in the act of burglarizing Pilney's house. He says he caught me. Now, you go and get Mr. Pilney and let him tell you who I am."

Judge Sharp scratched his chin and thought it over. At last he decided.

"Tom," he said, "you guard that side o' him an' I'll take care o' this, an' we'll all go up to Pilney's an' settle this."

Into the Pilney yard stalked a silent trio. Judge Sharp held Hubble's right arm, and he thought Migley held the left. But against the trembling side of Tom Migley

rested the muzzle of the forgotten revolver, and that worthy had found it impossible to put into execution any project of escape.

"Hey, Eleazar!" yelled Judge Sharp. "Oh, 'Leaze! Pilney! Hello, Pilney!"

Again a front window opened. To Hubble the opening of windows was growing monotonous.

"What is it?" Pilney sleepily asked.

"Come out here. Got a feller that was caught tryin' to break into your house."

"Hold him, Judge. I'll be right down."

Mr. Pilney, in trousers, above which bulged a twin to the night shirt which ballooned about Hubble, ran out.

"Here's the man," announced Sharp, pushing Hubble forward. Migley advanced simultaneously, being urged by the relentless revolver which was digging into his ribs.

"Which one?" asked Pilney, who could not recognize either in the semi-darkness under the trees.

"This smart aleck city chap. Says he is a-visiting you folks."

Pilney peered into Hubble's face.

"Why, he is visiting us. What does this mean? You must be mistaken."

"He is mistaken," declared Hubble, twisting away from the surprised constable. Then he went into detail, repeating the story of the night's adventures. Before he had finished, a white-robed figure rushed from the house and clung to his neck.

"Oh, Merc," Constance cried.

"What have they been doing to you?"

"Nothing but committing me for contempt of court."

"Here, Tom Migley, you villain!" shouted Sharp, grasping that person by the collar. "Don't try any o' your tricks here. Don't try to get away. I was onto ye all the time. Can't fool the old man, if he is a little slow. Worked ye purty smooth, didn't I?"

Migley wriggled, but for about the fifteenth time that night a revolver went against his ear. Then he capitulated.

"Now you just come along with me," Sharp ordered. "Your room's ready for you at the lock-up."

"But I want my pants," Migley insisted.

"Yes," laughed Eleazar Pilney, who had just begun to take in the appearance of the men, "give the fellow his pants, Merc."

Constance fled to the house, with a little shriek. Hubble hurried in, accompanied by Pilney, while Judge Sharp maintained his grip on Migley and cursed him fluently until Hubble reappeared, carrying a package under his arm.

"There are your trousers, Mr. Migley," he observed. "And now, Judge, you will permit me to bid you good night."

He and Pilney watched the redoubtable constable disappear down the hill with the prisoner. Then Pilney turned to him and said dryly:

"I calculate to give the farm I wanted to take you to see, to you and Connie when you get married."

The Captain's Brother

BY CHARLES TOWNSEND

The fast U. S. cruiser *Petrel* was driving through the green Atlantic in the teeth of a half gale. All things were taut and snug above and below; the ship was stanch and true; the officers were competent, the crew was fit to a man; nevertheless the nerves of every one aboard seemed to be on the stretch. And all because Captain Hardwick was in a bad temper.

He had not appeared until the middle of the forenoon watch—coming on deck at four bells—when he gave everybody in sight a very bad quarter of an hour. He was red-faced, loud-voiced, domineering. Nothing was right in the least. Everything was wrong in the main. All were "lubbers," "marines," "farmers." None of us was worth feeding to the fishes. All rigged up with verbal trimmings which would have startled a Mississippi steamboat-mate.

Several middies, full of wisdom, had skurried to cover when the old lion began to roar, and in the security of the wardroom were discussing the situation.

"Who says cussin' is a lost art?" asked Allen, triumphantly. Allen had been known to make remarks himself on occasion.

"Nobody, my son," answered Green; "but don't imagine for a moment that you can ever rise to his class."

"My ambition has its limits,"

answered Allen, modestly. "And say," he continued, enviously, "did any of you fellows notice how the wind went down and the waves were stilled when he was breaking chunks out of the atmosphere?"

"I did," cried "Bubble" Perkins, the latest arrival, "and I was thinking that if he has such spells often he could save our Uncle a good deal of wealth by talking right into the furnaces."

A stony silence followed this outburst; whereupon Perkins went on to explain by the aid of mental diagrams that the Old Man's language was so hot that it would make steam without coal, and—

"Bubble," interrupted "Deacon" White, solemnly, "you're not 'it.' Green is the only man in this mess who has the right to lie on all occasions when the truth is not necessary. You can no more play in his yard than I can ever hope to gambol around in Allen's profanity mill."

The new arrival being properly quashed for the time, the Deacon continued: "The Captain has these spells once every year—upon his natal day. He is a strict abstainer—never touches liquor at all—yet when he is on one of these tantrums it is easy to imagine what Nero must have been in his prime."

"I never saw Nero," answered Bubble meekly, "but I am much obliged for the information. Does

The author of "The Captain's Brother" writes as follows: "The accompanying strange story is fact dressed in fiction. The details were related to the writer some years ago by a young naval officer whose name is withheld for obvious reasons. An effort was made to get corroborative data from the Navy Department in order that a special article might be prepared, but the story

entered on the log-book of a certain man-of-war was so unusual—so improbable, indeed—that the Department has tied it up in strands of hard-knotted red tape. Therefore it is offered as an imaginary sea yarn with trifling embellishments, for the reader to ponder over and for the scientist to solve—if he can.

Charles Townsend.

the Captain ever get on one of these mental jags, so to speak, between birthdays?"

"Sometimes, but rarely."

"Was he having an intellectual skate about a month ago?"

"He was," volunteered Allen, solemnly. "I remember it with the utmost distinctness because he informed me that I was an animated dodo—although he did not use exactly those words."

"Has he a brother?"

"Not to my knowledge," answered White. "But why all these and so many of those?"

"Because when I was in Liverpool I saw a man of his size and shape who informed the hotel people that he must be called early, as he was to be Queen of the May; and who seemed half inclined to go on a snake hunt several times during the night."

"Did you learn his name?"

"No. The prehistoric female at the desk was not fluent, and one cannot paw over the register there as we free Americans are allowed to do."

Word was passed for the speaker at that moment, and the conference adjourned.

The Captain stormed about at intervals, damning all of whom he ran foul, through the whole alphabet forward and back; but at eight bells in the first dog-watch he entered his cabin and was seen no more during the day.

The wind went down with the sun; but a dirty, gray fog came up—a thick, pasty curtain—shutting out sky and sea, and promising a nasty night.

The Captain had been quiet for several hours, and I thought that he was asleep; but as I chanced to pass his door, which stood slightly ajar,

I heard him talking in a way so strange that in my amazement I stopped to listen. Just then two bells sounded.

It was nine o'clock.

And what was the Captain saying? "You are an infernal scoundrel, sir!" His voice shook with anger. "I don't know how the devil you got aboard my ship, but if you were not my brother I would feed you to the fishes and serve you right at that. Blast you! Can you never let our birthday pass without getting crazy drunk, though you know how it affects me? You suffer no shame from your beastliness, while I—don't touch me! Don't come near me, or I'll brain you!"

I was dazed and half frightened by what I had heard; and when the Captain came striding toward the door I hurried out of sight.

I was a mere youngster at that time, and had rather hazy ideas of what to do in an emergency. It seemed to me that I was in duty bound to report the matter; and yet, if I did, I might get into trouble; for spying, on board ship, is a cardinal sin.

While I stood debating the question, White came up.

"Hello, youngster," he said, cheerily, "what's the trouble?"

"The Captain's brother—" I began.

"Eh?" he cried sharply, "what about him?"

Whereupon I told him what I had heard. But he only laughed at the story, saying that I had been dreaming. "However," he added, to quiet my rising wrath, "we can easily find out. Come on."

He led the way to the Captain's room. The door was wide open, and there, in plain sight, was a man, whom, at the first glance, I mistook for the Captain.

"You see?" whispered White.

"Yes," I answered, "but that is not Captain Hardwick."

"Nonsense! I think I may trust my eyes," scouted White.

"But that man is not in uniform," I protested, "and besides, I saw the Captain go out."

"Dreaming again," laughed White.

"Don't be a particular ass," I answered, grumpily. Then, glancing around, I caught White's arm, and pointing with the other hand cried, "Look!"

There was a narrow passage a few feet beyond us; and there, huddled up on the deck, lay the Captain. We started toward him, but on the instant he opened his eyes and quickly rose to his feet. He paused a moment, with his hand pressed to his forehead, and then came to us.

"Well, gentlemen," he said in his old, genial, smiling way, "do you wish to see me?"

White was too dumfounded to reply; but I stammered out: "I—why—er—were you hurt, Captain?"

"Hurt?" he repeated with a laugh, "not that I know of; and yet—what was I doing on the deck?"

"You were lying there, sir; and as you had left your room only a few moments before, I thought perhaps that the man in there——"

"What man?" he asked as I paused.

"I thought it was you," I answered vaguely.

The Captain smiled. "Come in and explain yourself," he said.

I had been standing near the doorway all this time; but now I stepped aside for him; as I did so I glanced over my shoulder.

The room was vacant!

We entered, and I closed the door as directed. Then I glanced at White. His face was colorless. I

presume that I looked the same, for the Captain glanced at us curiously.

"What is the matter, young gentlemen?" he asked.

"The man!" gasped White.

"Where is he?"

"I don't understand," replied the Captain. "There is no one here but ourselves, as you can see; and there is no place in this room where a cat could hide, much less a man."

"But I saw him," said White, in a half whisper. "And I heard you talking to him," I added.

Most officers would have sent us to the devil for a brace of frightened fools; but Captain Hardwick was an exception.

"Sit down, boys," he said kindly. Then he asked to hear the whole story. As I proceeded, his face was a study. Clearly it was all news to him. When I finished, he remained buried in thought for a little time. Then he raised his head and answered slowly:

"What you have told me almost passes belief. I was aware that now and then memory seemed to play tricks so that I would lose all recollection of what had passed for several hours—sometimes for an entire day. I never knew what I did during those vanished periods, for nobody ever enlightened me. I have a twin brother who commands a trader—the *Mermaid*, of Liverpool—a South American liner. Through various reasons we have drifted apart, and I have not seen him for several years. I remember that when we were boys there was that remarkable bond of sympathy between us whereby one was always conscious of the other's ills. But that he should be intoxicated, and that I, as a result, should appear to be so, is fairly incredible."

"But you were talking to him, Captain," I insisted.

"You, too, saw him here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. He sat at your desk, writing."

"Then I'll look for the message," he said, lightly, as he turned to the table.

A sheet of writing paper was lying there in plain sight, and as his eyes fell upon it the color rushed from his cheeks, leaving his face as pale as ours had been. He snatched up the paper, examined it closely, and then gasped out: "Merciful God! It's my brother's handwriting!" With that he dropped the paper and rushed from the room.

Impelled by curiosity I picked up the fallen sheet, and there, in large, bold letters, was written: "*For heaven's sake steer due south at full speed!*"

When we came on deck the ship's course had already been changed; and soon we were racing away to the southward under a full head of steam.

Captain Hardwick was himself again—the same genial, kindly commander that he ever was save when under the strange spell which had so afflicted him at various times.

Although no one ventured to ask any questions, yet there was no little wonder over our change of course. The Captain volunteered no explanation, however, and White and I were discreet enough to say nothing.

What would come of it? Sailors are notoriously superstitious, and as I stood there by the rail staring at the murky gloom through which we were speeding, I felt a touch of the weird terror of the sea. It is easy enough to be brave on a bright, sunny day, when the winds are

stilled and the sea is calm; or even when the storm-king rages one need not lose heart if the ship is staunch and well manned. But this driving speed through the thick night, after the uncanny experience of the past hour, was terrifying.

"What do you think of it?" asked White, in a guarded whisper. Before I could reply there was a cry from the lookout—a sharp, startled cry. We rushed to starboard, and there, close at hand, lay a large steamship.

She was on fire. Fierce tongues of flame were visible here and there, cutting their way through the fog. The rolling billows of vapor took on strange shapes and colors, while the sea grew ruddy—a terrible yet fascinating sight.

The *Petrel's* engines were stopped and she swung up to the wind, while her great whistle roared out a welcome note of cheer.

The crew of the doomed vessel had already taken to the boats, and in a short time they were safe aboard the cruiser. The last man aboard sought the Captain.

"I thank you for your timely rescue," he said.

"Did all get off in safety?"

"All but our captain," replied the other. "He was killed by an explosion just before the fire broke out. He was—not exactly himself—and he had gone below where some naphtha was stored, carrying an open light."

"When did this happen?"

"About an hour ago."

The Captain's face paled. "What was his name and ship?" he asked huskily.

"The *Mermaid*, out of Liverpool, Captain James Hardwick."

The Story M'Vickar Did not Write

BY WINIFRED MALLON

After going through all his pockets successively, M'Vickar was reluctantly forced to admit that the match he had been in search of had gone to find the other half-dozen which he had thrust into his pocket that morning as he left the office, and which had all, one by one, ended each their several terms of usefulness.

It was like his luck, M'Vickar told himself, to be possessed of a good cigar and a silver matchbox, and then to discover the worthlessness of such possession for the want of an insignificant article whose money value was, perhaps, generously estimated, one-fiftieth of a cent.

He sighed as he gloomily replaced the cigar, and tipped his hat further over his eyes with a movement of disgust, as he glanced over the deserted dock. It is not exhilarating to spend an entire forenoon on a wharf in the full blaze of a July sun, and after all to have had only one's trouble for one's pains.

The Old Man had told him, enriching the text of his remarks with numerous picturesque interjections, that a certain person was to be interviewed at the Bank Street Wharf "if you have to wait there half a day for him." M'Vickar wondered, glancing at his watch, whether at half-past one he might be considered as having obeyed instructions should he present himself at the office without further delay.

While he stood irresolutely debating the question, a man came swiftly out on the wharf from a side street and walked directly to the edge of the dock, removing his hat and flourishing a large handkerchief

about his red and heated face. He was short and stout, a man of perhaps fifty years, M'Vickar judged, of no very prepossessing countenance, wearing trousers of a pronounced plaid and a short sack coat. From where he stood M'Vickar could see the red folds of the man's thick neck rise above his soiled and wilted collar to meet the stubbly red hair.

M'Vickar watched him idly enough for a moment before he straightened up and thrust his watch back in his pocket, stepping, as he did so, out of the friendly shade of the large lumber pile which had sheltered him for the last hour. Then he stopped short, his lips shaped themselves as if to whistle, but he made no sound as he stood intently watching.

A young man in overalls and a blue-checked shirt and with his hat pulled down over his eyes, was moving swiftly down the dock. There was nothing remarkable in the fellow's appearance or in his being there at that time, or in the fact of his evident haste, but for all that M'Vickar felt possessed by an uneasy sense that something was about to happen. Vaguely he felt that he knew the man and tried instinctively to place him in his mind, and there was something in the fellow's movements that arrested his attention.

The man on the edge of the dock had replaced his hat and was holding his coat away from his body with his right hand while he explored an inner pocket with his left, his head bent and himself evidently intent on his search, when the young fellow in overalls, his hands thrust deep in his pockets, came swiftly on behind him. There was a sudden shock



DRAWN BY T. S. TOUSEY

"Pitched headlong from the dock into the water below."

and collision, and the large man's arms flew out sharply as he pitched headlong from the dock into the water below. His assailant, whose impetus had carried him on for a few steps, wheeled about, and as M'Vickar came running up he plunged in. When a crowd of hands and stevedores, who had been employed in unloading a scow at the lower wharf, arrived in answer to M'Vickar's excited hail, both the men had disappeared from sight.

In the crowd which quickly assembled on the dock opinions were divided as to the likelihood of the unfortunates being swept under the piles, and at the least knocked senseless, and ropes were produced to be in readiness the instant opportunity for their use might arrive. M'Vickar was unable to throw any light on the identity of either man,

and the watchers relapsed into silence while scanning the surface of the water for the slightest disturbance.

Suddenly a man, with a quick indrawing of his breath, gathered the rope he held and threw the looped end far out, never moving his eyes from the spot aimed at. Then there was dead, breathless silence, followed by a general gasp of relief as the rope tightened and ran out rapidly, and in a few moments the crowd of men on the wharf stood over two limp and seemingly lifeless bodies.

As M'Vickar worked over the younger man, he was struck again by the sense of having seen the fellow's face before, and he was still wrestling with his memory when the man opened his eyes and looked straight into the face bent over him

with a blankness which changed instantly to what M'Vickar could have sworn was a flash of recognition. But when, a few moments later, he regained his feet, though standing somewhat unsteadily, he made no rejoinder to M'Vickar's questions or comments, only muttering inarticulately and at the same time raising his hand to his head as if to pull down the hat that was not there, and clutching closely at the breast of his shirt, torn open now. He glanced once at the group bending over the prostrate man near by, then suddenly, and before M'Vickar, whose attention was momentarily diverted from him, could stop him, he was gone.

The hands stood aside and two of their number raised the older and half-drowned man to his feet. He was stuttering and swearing to himself and did not appear to notice any one near him.

When M'Vickar came up, the man was spluttering excitedly. "I'm robbed!" he shouted, gesticulating wildly in the air. "That man knocked me into the water and then robbed me. He stole nigh a thousand dollars from me. He tried to kill me, I tell you. He tried to kill me, and then he robbed me. He robbed me of——"

"Aw, drop that," growled one of the hands. "He saved your life. More fool he," he added in a tolerably distinct aside.

"Swenson's a blame' good fellow," contributed the man who had thrown the rope.

The man turned upon M'Vickar, who grasped his chance with alacrity. "Robbed you, you say," M'Vickar's voice was brisk and cheerful. "What makes you think that? Had you a reason to think he owed you a grudge? And how much money did you say it was? Are you sure it did

not merely fall from your pocket in the scuffle and fall? Do you know the——" But the man he was questioning had been eyeing him with increasing rage, perplexity and suspicion, and now, with an inarticulate snarl, he thrust M'Vickar aside, and pushing his way through the small crowd that had gathered, he crossed the dock and disappeared up a side street, walking fast and with a sort of shuffling gait.

The new reporter turned dejectedly from an amazed contemplation of his retreating back, and realized all too late that he had left unasked—this practical application of the church service to his reportorial experiences had struck him early in his career—all the things he ought to have asked, while asking many things that could at a pinch have been left untold. He turned to the crowd. "Say, fellows, any of you know his name?" M'Vickar demanded.

Most of the dock hands and stevedores were going each their several ways, but one paused to regard M'Vickar's agonized query.

"Oh, yes," he said dryly, "we know him. Folks in this part o' town most generally know him. They've reason. That's Hammersley. Joseph K. Hammersley." He paused and considered M'Vickar meditatively. "I expect you're a reporter," he said with a grin. "And you're a new one or you'd know Hammersley. And he'll know you from to-day. You made him mad. He's not used to having questions fired at him like that. That's usually his own particular graft. He'll remember you. Yes, sir," concluded the stevedore, with a departing shake of the head, "that's Joseph K. Hammersley." He shambled after the others.

M'Vickar looked blankly after him,

then he recalled hearing the name and groped in his mind for the connection. Hammersley, Joseph K. Hammersley, that was the man the boys in the office had spoken of the day before. M'Vickar suddenly remembered. That was the man who was a power in the Third Ward, owing to the influence he wielded with the saloon owners and the Powers behind and underneath things, not less Powers though unseen and unofficial. Known to be crooked, but never disturbed. Yes, M'Vickar remembered.

Well, the morning was wasted after all. He had no story that would do to turn in. To mention the affair at all with such paucity of coherent information would only be to draw down still more thunders on his head. Gloomily M'Vickar reflected that journalism was not his line. Never had any one of his acquaintances made so many brilliant failures as he in the same short space of time. And now he must return to the office and face the music again.

But at the office a temporary reprieve was his. The Old Man was out. M'Vickar received the information with prayerful thanksgiving and was about to start in search of lunch, when a reporter rummaging in his desk bethought him to call after his retreating back that a telephone message had just been taken for him.

Wondering much at this unusual occurrence, M'Vickar went to his desk and rescued the slip of paper. "Will Mr. M'Vickar call, as soon as he conveniently may, upon Miss Helen Cabot, Tremont Place?" M'Vickar's wonder grew. He had met Miss Cabot at a benefit for the Children's Hospital, one of his first assignments, and very nearly the only one from which he had escaped unscathed. He thankfully remembered

Miss Cabot as the young lady who furnished him with a statement of the things he most needed to know, and none of which, he afterward remembered, he had at the time thought to ask. When, inquired M'Vickar, had the message been received? And upon learning that it was something like a half hour before, he concluded that many things were more immediately important than a mere matter of lunch, and promptly set out for Tremont Place.

Yes, Miss Cabot was at home, he was told, and almost immediately she came into the room.

"Mr. M'Vickar!" She shook hands impulsively. "Really," she broke out, "I don't know how to tell you what I—why I sent for you. It will seem to you, I am afraid, such a dreadful imposition on your time and good nature. It seems," she regarded M'Vickar doubtfully, "so much worse now that you are here."

As she talked, M'Vickar's spirits rose. When last he had seen Miss Cabot she had impressed him as an almost terrifyingly certain and self-possessed young woman, and although at the time those special traits of character operated to his distinct advantage, they had at the same time impressed him with a rather uncomfortable sense of awe. But the Miss Cabot of to-day—M'Vickar laughed. Then to relief succeeded interest.

"Miss Cabot," he said solemnly, "if there is anything I can do for you, don't hesitate to mention it. I have been trying all day to accomplish something, and up to this moment I have signally failed. I usually do. And if you can suggest anything I will consider it my last chance to make good, and I promise you that I will surely try, that I will do my very best," said M'Vickar, earnestly, "to put it through for you.



DRAWN BY T. S. TOUSEY

"That man knocked me into the water and then robbed me!"

I remember," he added, "although you have probably forgotten, an occasion when you helped me very much."

"It's very good of you," Miss Cabot said, "to try to help me out. Mr. M'Vickar," she said, irrelevantly, "have you a license to run an automobile?"

M'Vickar gasped. "Yes," he said, "or rather, I had, a few months ago. I don't know for how long a time a license holds good. And that's another thing I need to find out," he added, half to himself. "You see," he explained, "I am a newspaper man, and newspaper men are expected to know all sorts of things. I don't think," he said conscientiously, "that I am a very good newspaper man, yet."

"Oh, well," said Miss Cabot, absently, "that doesn't matter. I mean," she said hastily, "about the date of your license. The great point is that you have one. You see I haven't. I hate an automobile. Father, on the contrary, is crazy about them, and we have a machine out in the stables that has almost crowded the carriages out of doors. I always have refused to learn to run it, but to-night I'm sorry I was so stubborn about it. Father is out of town and I am alone here with the servants; my mother is staying just now with my married sister, which is, as it happens, extremely fortunate. A sudden necessity has arisen to run in to Bridgeport to-night in time to meet the Colonial Express for New York, leaving Bridgeport about nine o'clock, I believe, and yet we can't leave here till after dark."

She laughed a little nervously. "I'm taking it rather for granted that you will step into the breach, you see," she said.

"Certainly, Miss Cabot. Of

course," said M'Vickar, promptly. "But really," he complained, "you are not playing fair. I thought you wanted me to *do* something for you, and you are inviting me to take an automobile ride."

"Oh," said Miss Cabot, grimly, "don't be alarmed. You will be doing something, never fear. The truth is, Mr. M'Vickar, that my object in going in to Bridgeport to-night is to assist in the escape on the Colonial Express of a man who would, if he remained here, be arrested for theft. I have every reason to believe that a warrant for his arrest is out at this present moment."

"Oh!" said M'Vickar blankly. Then he rallied. "So much the better," he declared. "It is now not merely an automobile ride, but an adventure. Will the thief—your friend accompany us," he asked politely, "or meet us at the other end?"

Miss Cabot laughed outright. "Mr. M'Vickar," she said, "you are better than my wildest hope. It's not nearly as bad as it sounds. My friend, the thief, and his poor old father, are to accompany us, and when you know why," clenching her small fist viciously, "you won't wonder at my endeavor to circumvent the law. The law!" she repeated derisively. "Do you know, Mr. M'Vickar, in the past year I have grown to think that the law in this town is the wildest farce ever instituted in the memory of man? I have been engaged in social settlement work all winter, and the cases that I have seen, the hopeless, pitiful cases of rank injustice! And now to-day, the Swensons——"

M'Vickar started.

"Do you know them?" Miss Cabot asked, quickly. "I thought you did know Ole Swenson, but I was not

sure. From something he once said to me I thought you might be the reporter who wrote up the story of his saving a child's life down at the water-front last January. Oh!" she cried, delightedly, "it was you. You do remember?"

M'Vickar struck one hand sharply into the other. "Of course," he cried. "I knew him perfectly well, but I couldn't place him. So he did rob Hammersley, instead of saving his life, this afternoon. But why did he rob him, Miss Cabot?" he asked. "What is the mystery about all this? That man's no common thief."

"Indeed he isn't!" exclaimed Miss Cabot indignantly. "And the mystery is that that man Hammersley is still at large. Mr. M'Vickar, he ought to be *hung*. He is an outrage on society. He is the chief, the boss, the man in control, of the worst element in town, the sharpers in business and in politics who live by cheating others and yet manage to escape detection. You know, you must know, the sort of man he is."

M'Vickar nodded.

"Of course you do. He's notorious. And yet he goes scot-free. Well, this winter he has been devoting his attention to the foreigners, the Italians, Poles, Scandinavians, down around the Yards. He got up a sort of fake insurance society, not a real company, you know, but a sort of heavy benevolent affair. You couldn't call it an insurance scheme exactly, either. He and two or three of his familiars canvassed the locality and tried to inveigle the foreign workmen into turning over their savings to him, to be returned on demand in case of the death of a member of the family, or in case they left town to engage in business elsewhere. And they claimed they



DRAWN BY T. S. TOUSEY

"You know the sort of man he is."

would invest the money; oh, they had the whole thing most plausibly made up.

"But what appealed to the poor people was that they would get more than the original amount of money when they went for it. The provisos did not mean much to them, and they were not dwelt on extensively, as you may imagine. So they listened to the voice of the charmer, and what with their ignorance of English and their mortal dread of an abstract institution like a real banking or insurance company—Hammersley seemed safer because he was a man they knew and saw every day and who was always within reach—they, ever so many of them, turned over their

poor little savings to that wretched man and his fellows. Only to find, of course, that it was more effectually lost to them than if they had dropped it off the dock. There was always some reason, some by-law, to justify Hammersley and Company in their refusal to pay back the money when applied for.

"Well, the Swensons escaped him as long as Ole was here to circumvent him. But last March Ole had a good offer up the river, and he left his old father here until his return three months later. Then he would have had money enough saved up, and he was going to take his father back to Sweden. The Settlement people knew that he was away, and they tried to keep an eye on poor old Jan and look out for him, but—oh, Mr. M'Vickar, think of it!—Hammersley did get around old Jan Swenson, and got all the poor little savings of years away from him. One of the arguments that finally persuaded the old man was that Ole might get hurt or sick, and in that case the promised income on the money would be doubled. Jan was keeping Ole's savings as well as his own; he hasn't been able to work much for the past year, and when Ole got back last week, he found his father actually hungry.

"You can imagine the rest, Mr. M'Vickar. Ole is a peaceful, law-abiding fellow, with the heart of a little child, but he knew the case was desperate. He knew Joseph K. Hammersley, and he knew the law, or enough of it to realize the hopelessness of an appeal to it. And you saw what he did. He had shadowed Hammersley for days to get just such an opportunity. He knew that he had the money with him this afternoon, and—he took back his own. That's all, Mr. M'Vickar. And for that there is a warrant out

against him, and he is hiding this moment out in the loft over the stables, with his poor old father, waiting until dark to try to get away. By leaving to-night and making the Colonial Express he will reach New York in time for the *Carpathia* which sails at sunrise to-morrow. This, Mr. M'Vickar, is the adventure, as you call it, to which I invite you. Be sure you quite understand. You will be assisting a felony—I believe that is the term—evading the majesty of the law, and all the rest of it. Do you want to repent while there is time?"

But M'Vickar was poring over the shipping news in the morning paper spread over one knee, and comparing notes closely with a time table, the folds of which refused to remain properly opened, on the other. He did not hear the question.

When the great red automobile, the pride of Mr. Nicolas Cabot's heart and the terror of the neighborhood, issued from the Cabot stables a few hours later, Miss Cabot in the most approved automobile get-up, and M'Vickar beside her, his cap pulled low over his eyes, were the living embodiments of automobile enthusiasts. In the seat behind, Ole Swenson, in the long gray coat and tall hat of the largest retainer of the house of Cabot, sat immovable, arms folded, the picture of an ideal footman. Old Jan was invisible, cowering somewhat uncomfortably, but safely, in the body of the machine.

Many things had been thought out and disposed of in the last two hours, and as the gates closed behind them and the long road to Bridgeport stretched ahead in the gathering darkness, Miss Cabot drew a faint breath of relief.

"It is early in the game to feel confident," she said, "but I really think we shall succeed. Hawkins told me that a man was hanging around the stables late this afternoon, a man he has seen several times lately in company with Hammersley. I quite expected that the house would be watched as soon as the Swensons disappeared, for it is well known that the Settlement people have taken an interest in them and that I have come to the rescue once or twice since Ole left old Jan here alone. But I saw no one around when we came out, and I don't really imagine that even Hammersley would care to attempt to stop us, even if he suspected the truth."

M'Vickar glanced ahead. "Well," he said, judicially, "of course as long as we are in this State he might try it, if he suspected us of helping the Swensons off. Across the line it would be another story. Anyhow," he added, "it doesn't matter. Nothing Hammersley can do can beat this." The automobile was speeding silently along, the wind whistling softly past. "We are not going anything like the rate we will later on, when we get a little farther out of town. Any one who can catch us then is welcome to."

"They may not have an automobile," said Miss Cabot, "but they might have a pistol, you know. And when one resists an officer—" she suggested.

"That's true, of course," M'Vickar admitted. "Oh, well," he said, reassuringly, "they very seldom know how to shoot, those fellows. And anyhow they shoot wild, to scare, not to hit a person." It suddenly occurred to him that he was talking to a young lady, to whom in all probability a firearm, loaded or unloaded, was a horror and

a dread. He stole an apprehensive glance at his companion. Miss Cabot's face was somewhat indistinct; the collar of her loose greatcoat was turned up, and the visor of her cap threw a dark shadow over her face. She was looking straight ahead, and M'Vickar wondered if she were too frightened to speak.

The moon had come up and the road lay white before them. The street lamps had been left behind and the shadows were dense along the roadside, now more thickly wooded. M'Vickar let out the machine to fuller speed. From behind them came a faint murmur, rising and falling like a chant. M'Vickar wondered and then turned his head. Ole Swenson still sat like a statue, his lips compressed and his face a sickly white. But down on the floor, cowering in terror, old Jan was praying to his gods.

When he turned back, Miss Cabot laid her hand on his arm. "Look," she said, "ahead by the turn, where the moonlight falls across the road."

M'Vickar looked, and whistled softly. Then he glanced keenly around. "Yes," he said, nodding. "This is where we get it. The State line is only about a mile away. I wonder," he said, interestedly, "if our friend is playing a lone hand, and whether this is to be a private or an official hold-up."

Miss Cabot glanced at him. "There are two men," she said, briefly. "One is an officer. He went back in the bushes on the other side of the road just before I spoke to you. The—hold-up—will be official."

"The plot thickens," M'Vickar said, cheerfully.

Again Miss Cabot glanced covertly at him. He was bending forward with a look of rather pleased expect-

ancy, and measuring with a calculating eye the rapidly-lessening distance between themselves and the waiting figure. He brought the automobile to a less breathless speed.

Then Miss Cabot spoke. "The man," she said, "is Hammersley. As I thought, the fellow hanging round the stables, though he discovered nothing, still carried his suspicions to his chief. And Hammersley thought them good enough to act upon. The officer is there in the interests of law and order," she said, sarcastically, "and — Hammersley—to serve the warrant on Swenson if he finds him. He, quite legally, will order us to stop." She paused.

"Yes," M'Vickar said, cheerfully. "So he will." His voice was somewhat muffled. He was reaching down beside him and doing something, unintelligible to Miss Cabot, with a small crank over which she had seen her father hover lovingly but fearfully, touching it with something of the air of a child fingering a giant fire-cracker.

M'Vickar sat erect and drew his cap down closer. "Yes," he said, "he will order us to stop." He glanced ahead. The officer was plainly visible now, standing by the roadside, the moon shining on his brass buttons. "He will order us to stop," M'Vickar repeated, with an abandoned grin. He looked down affectionately at the mechanism at his feet. Then he turned to Miss Cabot, his brow wrinkling reminiscently. "I have not run away from a policeman since I left college," he said seriously. "Don't be frightened, but sit tight. Hold hard back there," he added over his shoulder.

As his hand sought the crank he looked up, somewhat uneasily, at the young lady beside him. Her

voice had sounded somewhat strained when she had last spoken, and her silence made him uneasy. But Miss Cabot was looking straight before her with no visible signs of fright. A slight smile curled her lips, her eyes were dancing. As M'Vickar straightened up he distinctly heard her laugh, a little breathless laugh.

Everything happened at once. The great red automobile quivered for an instant like a live thing, then sprang forward and flew over the road. Trees and bushes lost all shape and outline as they whizzed by. Miss Cabot caught a glimpse of Hammersley dancing up and down with waving arms, heard a shout from the officer, then another, saw his upraised arm and the glint of moonlight upon steel. Then they were by. Behind them a shot rang out.

There was an exclamation from M'Vickar. Miss Cabot was swept from her seat and forced down to the floor. She felt M'Vickar's arm reach across her shoulder, and fleetingly wondered at his strength. Another shot from behind, and another and another in rapid succession. "Get down!" yelled M'Vickar over his shoulder, and the girl crouching at his knees heard him swear once under his breath.

One last shot from behind, then silence. Miss Cabot did not move. The arm across her shoulder, though no longer rigid, still held her closely. The cold night wind whistled by, and above, the stars twinkled placidly. The danger, she knew, was past.

Then M'Vickar's voice was in her ears. "I didn't hurt you, did I?" he was asking her. He bent over her remorsefully. "I never thought the beggar would shoot." There was a little excited break in his

voice. The automobile slowed down a little, Miss Cabot moved and raised her head, and for one moment felt the heart of the man behind her beat against her cheek.

Then M'Vickar lifted her gently to the seat beside him. "It's all right now," he said. "We've won out." Miss Cabot, her eyes like stars, turned toward him, and silently the two shook hands. Before them, through the night, shone the lights of Bridgeport.

When the Cabot automobile was (by another road) well on its homeward way, Miss Cabot broke a silence that was attaining uncomfortable length. "I wonder," she said, "how the chief of police is going to justify one of his men for attempting to stop me in the public road and shooting at my footman, whom I leave in Bridgeport to attend to some matters for my father."

M'Vickar grinned. "The way you put it," he said, "it sounds convincing."

"It is convincing," said Miss Cabot, confidently. "I am Nicolas Cabot's daughter."

"Yes," replied M'Vickar slowly.

Miss Cabot turned to look at him. "Well," she demanded, "am I not? You seem to have a doubt about it."

"Oh, no," M'Vickar said, hastily. "Not at all. I was just thinking about it when you spoke."

"About what?" cried Miss Cabot. But when M'Vickar answered, her self-possession failed her for a moment and she flushed a little, quite incomprehensibly.

"That you are Nicolas Cabot's daughter," said M'Vickar.

And it was not until he was leaving



"'Hang the story!' said M'Vickar."

her in the hall that a sudden memory swept over her.

"Oh," she cried, "your story! Oh, poor Mr. M'Vickar, your story exposing Hammersley. And such a good story. And you can't use it after all on account of the Swensons."

"Story!" repeated M'Vickar. "Story!" he said, blankly. Then he laughed. He thought of the mad ride through the night, the girl beside him; of the moment he had held her with the bullets flying past; of Ole Swenson's face as they parted in Bridgeport. "Story!" he repeated disdainfully. He looked at Miss Cabot, tall and beautiful in the soft light.

"Hang the story!" said M'Vickar.

The Sophistry of Mrs. Morrow

BY LOUISE HARDENBERGH ADAMS

"Of all things! The postman's goin' to stop at Barnes'!" exclaimed Mrs. Morrow, turning one of her treasured geraniums that interfered with her view of the street. "Mis' Barnes hinted Sue'd made a special friend down at Chester; like's not that's a letter from him. Oh! Dr. Brown's folks have got Tom's letter at last!" she cried, "an' I'll miss my guess if he don't ask fur money. I'm sort o' thankful I haven't any boys," she sighed, watching the street with renewed interest. "There he's goin' in Ashbys'; now, that's Louell's letter, an' she's comin' home with the children, fur that visit. 'Fore this day's over Mis' Ashby'll run in to borry somethin'. Pity sakes! he's comin' in here! Why! I've got Sam's letter fur this month. He's made a mistake."

"Sure that letter's fur me?" she cried curiously, as she opened her front door.

The postman smilingly handed her a letter. "Sure you're Mrs. A. Morrow?" he questioned.

"That's as plain as the nose on your face," she laughed. "Well, if it ain't mine I'll drop it in the box at the corner."

She carried the letter into her bedroom, and although she lived all alone, carefully closed the door before reading it. "I'm sure 'tain't fur me," she murmured, "fur it says 'your niece,' an' Sam's my only kin both sides; so it must be wrong. Then she's comin' from—let me see," she turned the letter with trembling hands. "Gracious to me! Californy! This letter's fur—why! I shouldn't wonder a mite if 'twas old Adeline Morrow's. Well, she's

dead, an' all the Mis' Morrow's letters are mine."

She dropped into a chair and rocked fast for a few moments. "Every soul on this street's had company of own folks since I lived here but me, an' I feel it, I do," she half groaned. "Now, this ain't my letter, an' she ain't my niece, but I'm a real Mis' Morrow, an' why can't I have her a-visitin' me? Mebbe, if I ken, the hanker fur my little Rosey won't be so bad."

"There's Mis' Ashby a-comin' here," she said, with a sigh of vexation as she started slowly for the door. "Now I've got to hear all 'bout her Louell."

Mrs. Ashby lurched into the house with a sideways movement of her short, round body, and sank on the nearest chair. "Louell's comin' nex' week," she gurgled, "an' I run over to see if you'd lend me your spare-bed pillers, an' a few o' the bloomin' plants, to sort o' liven things up a little. Louell's so used to havin' things fine an' tasty to home, an'—"

Mrs. Morrow drew up her thin figure with dignity. Her eyes fairly snapped at the mention of her plants. She shuddered as she thought of Louell's children tearing their precious leaves. "I'm a-lookin' fur company myself," she hurriedly interrupted, "an' I'll need my things."

"My goodness sakes!" gasped Mrs. Ashby, "I saw the postman comin' here, but I never s'posed 'twas anythin' but a patent medicine 'tisement, or somethin' o' that sort. So you're 'spectin' vis'tors! Where do they live at, an' who be they?"

she questioned with undisguised curiosity.

"It's my niece from Californy," Mrs. Morrow answered, with a firm set of her thin lips. "There! I ain't to blame," she thought, "she drove me to it; an' 'tis Mis' Morrow's niece."

Mrs. Ashby radiated astonishment.

"Goose-eggs!" she exclaimed, "I never heard tell o' her; but s'pose she was so far off you ain't had her in mind often. Oh, say! I'm awful sorry 'bout 'em things, fur I lotted on gittin' all I needed o' you. You're forehanded," she groaned, "an' I jest can't git caught up since Mr. Ashby died."

A strange quiver of her lips betrayed Mrs. Morrow's amusement. She waited with impatience for the questions she knew must come, before Mrs. Ashby took her departure, and hastened to spread her wonderful news of Mrs. Morrow's niece, throughout the neighborhood.

"I'm real upset over your niece's comin' jest now," sighed Mrs. Ashby, "fur I need your things so, to help me out; I don't see how I ken git on without 'em. Mebbe she'll go first, an' then I ken git 'em. Be she a married woman?"

"No-o," gasped Mrs. Morrow.

Mrs. Ashby eyed her inquisitively.

"Be she young?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes-s," Mrs. Morrow answered shortly, fearful the woman who signed her letter "Your loving niece, Eliza" might be old enough to be called "grandma."

Fortunately, Mrs. Ashby's eagerness to be the first to impart the news hurried her away.

"Oh, Mis' Barnes!" she gushed at her first stopping-place, "Mis' Morrow's niece, a young, good-lookin', well-to-do girl's a-comin' from Californy to visit! Ever heard

tell o' her? Say, don't it seem queer how Mis' Morrow's bin tight es wax 'bout her? She must had a fuss, or mebbe a black sheep 'mong her folks."

In the meantime, Mrs. Morrow, feeling like the veritable black sheep, tried to convince herself she was in the right; but an ugly old word rang in her ears, and the fate of the liar seemed ready to engulf her. In her desperation she read the letter again, carefully searching for a meaning she could turn for her own justification. Failing in this, she counted the days, and was astonished to find the niece might be expected that afternoon.

"I'll jest git ready fur her, an' tell her after she gits here," she reasoned. 'Then if she goes off, Miss' Ashby won't know why. She must be looked after by some one, an' as she says she's never seen me, I ken jest bring her home 'fore she guesses who I be. If she don't know her aunt's dead, ain't likely she ever cared much fur her, an' comin' so lonely like, it's a real providence I'm here to look out fur her.' Pushing from her every thought except this, Mrs. Morrow comforted herself with her motives as she made the necessary preparations for her guest.

How it came about she never quite remembered, but certainly the young woman made the first advances, when she met her at the station, by asking, "Is this Aunt Morrow?"

Mrs. Morrow's "Yes" was without hesitation, for she could claim that degree of kinship. She was Sam's aunt, and to him always "Aunt Morrow."

"Where shall I tell the man to take my trunk?" asked Eliza. A trunk visitor was a great rarity on Mrs. Morrow's street, and raised her to a greater dignity than she had

ever even dreamed of. She proudly gave the desired directions.

Stealing many glances at the bright-faced, energetic young woman who walked by her side, and feeling that her captive was one to be proud of, Mrs. Morrow fully enjoyed the observation of her neighbors as she led the way home.

Niece Eliza was bright and vivacious, with much to say about herself and her work as a teacher. As she talked, her mind worked, and after a long, keen look in Mrs. Morrow's flushed face, she asked abruptly:

"How old are you, Aunt? You seem so much younger than I expected to find you."

Mrs. Morrow laughed nervously. "How old do you s'pose?" she asked in her turn.

"Let me see," reflected Eliza, "why, you must be past seventy, but you really don't look one day over fifty."

"That's a good age," Mrs. Morrow said, with a queer smile, as she thought of her forty-nine years.

"Where do Ward's folks live now?" demanded Eliza briskly.

"I—I don't rightly know," faltered Mrs. Morrow. "I—I—jest ain't kept track o' 'em."

"That's strange. In your last letter you said you expected to spend some time with them," Eliza cried curiously. "What made you give up your visit?"

Mrs. Morrow murmured something about a draft as she closed the door with a quick movement.

"Oh, Aunt Morrow, did you ever find out why Uncle Seth acted the way he did?" Eliza questioned eagerly. "Pa always said he was sure you knew, so I thought I'd ask you the first thing."

"Did your pa know?" wildly questioned Mrs. Morrow.

"Mercy, no!" exclaimed Eliza, "I'd found it out from him if he had. Don't you think it was a curious thing?"

Fully realizing what a tangled web she had spread for her own undoing, Mrs. Morrow gladly escaped to open the door for Mrs. Ashby, and introduced Eliza by a name of her own invention.

"Miss Elizes, glad to be made 'quainted with you," wheezed Mrs. Ashby, staring inquisitively at Eliza. "Did you have a nice time comin'? I know your aunt's glad to see you, fur all she's never let on a word o' you 'fore. I s'pose you're havin' a good time a-talkin'. When Louell comes we jest sit an' talk an' rock fur days," she giggled. "Like es not it's triflin' things, but, goose-eggs! one ken talk an awful heap over what other folks eats. Had your Aunt Morrow changed much since you saw her?" she asked pryingly.

Eliza looked at her coolly. "I never saw my aunt before," she said, with a quiet smile.

"Gracious to me!" Mrs. Ashby cried, "how awful funny! However did you make out 'twas her? I'd think you'd feel a misdoubt, 'less you knew her sure."

Eliza liked to have things clear before her mentally. Something was wrong. Mrs. Morrow's words and actions convinced her of that, but, regarding Mrs. Ashby as a meddlesome old woman, she waited impatiently until the door closed after her; then she turned impulsively, and laid her strong, capable-looking hand on Mrs. Morrow's shoulder. "Now, Aunt," she said earnestly, "you must tell me what's troubling you, for I saw your distress while that woman was here. Tell me, are you too poor to have me stay? I can pay my way, and I

surely didn't come to add to your burdens."

Mrs. Morrow looked at her visitor with eyes full of despair. "No! no! it isn't that," she said earnestly, "but I never rightly sensed how 'twould be till you came. Now, if I die, I must tell you the truth; fur I—I stole you, an' I tried my best to think I was a-doin' right."

Eliza gazed at her incredulously. "Stole me!" she laughed. "Are you joking?"

"No, I'm not a-jokin', but I'm a lyin' old fool," moaned Mrs. Morrow, "an' now I must tell you all, fur if I don't I'll smother. You see, I knowed all the time your letter wasn't fur me; but I jest claimed it; then I claimed you, an' told Mis' Ashby you was my niece, when all the time I knew both the letter an' you belonged to old Mis' Adeline Morrow."

"Where is she?" Eliza asked sharply.

"She's dead," answered Mrs. Morrow, "more'n a year."

Eliza drew a long breath. "Then you are not my aunt at all?" she said slowly.

Mrs. Morrow's eyes filled with great tears. "No," she sobbed, "but how I wisht I was! Since my girl, my Rosey, died, I haven't a woman 'on earth that's kin to me, an' mebbe as God knows how lonely I am, He'll forgive my lyin', fur I did hanker fur you so."

Eliza's insight was keen; her heart filled with sudden pity as she looked at the sorrowful face before her. In spite of the deception practiced on herself, it was marked with lines of strong honesty and uprightness; a good, faithful soul tented in that frail, life-worn frame.

She threw her arms about the trembling figure, and kissed the quivering lips. "There, there," she

said tenderly, "don't you cry, dear, you didn't do anything bad; you're good as gold, and I'm going to have you for my own aunt always."

"Oh, don't be so good to me," moaned Mrs. Morrow. "Oh, I never did stealin' or cheatin'; now I've done 'em both, an' I'm worse than a heathen, fur I knew better. I feel mean; meaner'n dirt."

"You must not feel bad any more, for you've made me very happy," laughed Eliza, "and, like you, I've been hungry for kin folks, too, ever since my mother died."

"Hope to goodness, you won't ever feel sorry you've took up with me," half-laughed Mrs. Morrow, drying her eyes. "I jest do wonder if 'tis right fur me to feel so thankful; but I can't help it."

Later, Eliza's appreciation of her home-like, old-fashioned room quieted some of Mrs. Morrow's scruples, and sent her to her own room in a curiously divided state of mind.

"Aunt Morrow, I want you to do something for me," Eliza began, as they sat at the breakfast table the next morning. "Promise me that you will?"

Mrs. Morrow's smile was a wintry one. "I best not say no, when you're so good," she said humbly, passing Eliza an amber-clear cup of coffee.

"Then it's settled!" Eliza cried brightly, "we're going."

Mrs. Morrow set her coffee pot down with a bang. "Goin' where?" she questioned in surprise.

"Just a little trip, to see something new," Eliza answered with a smile.

"I can't very well go," Mrs. Morrow said reluctantly, a look of dismayed hesitation on her face. "I can't really 'ford to go," she sighed.

"I'm inviting you to take the trip

with me, and it will not cost you one cent," Eliza said with emphasis. "Please go with me," she coaxed.

"I've been 'bout so little, it's awful temptin', an' I've got such a longin' to see creation," Mrs. Morrow laughed tremulously, "I jest can't say no."

Eliza sprang up, hurried around the table and kissed her. "How would you like to see Washington?" she asked gaily.

"Wash-in-ton! Why, that would be next to goin' to heaven! But I—I—" Mrs. Morrow stopped abruptly.

"We'll go there," Eliza declared with enthusiasm. "Oh, my! there's Mrs. Borrow," she whispered, as Mrs. Ashby ambled slowly into the room.

"We're goin' to Wash-in-ton!" Mrs. Morrow cried, her voice jubilant, "an' mebbe we'll see the President!"

Mrs. Ashby lifted her hands in astonishment. "Goose-eggs!" she exclaimed, "did I ever hear the like! Wash-in-ton! My! Louell's jest set on seein' that town, but she ain't ever got to go. O-ooo! now I ken borry all 'em things you offered to lend me if Eliza didn't stay. I'll take 'em all over to-day."

In a flash Mrs. Morrow's face changed; all the happiness faded out of it as she looked imploringly at Eliza.

"What things?" demanded Eliza briskly.

"Jest her blankets, an' pillers, an' some o' the plants, an' say, if you're goin' to be 'way I'd like the rockin' cheers, an' the best sofy." Mrs. Ashby evidently believed in asking for all she wanted, for after pausing for breath, she added, "An' mebbe some o' your 'best dishes; them thin, blue-like ones."

Mrs. Morrow paled visibly.

"Mercy!" Eliza cried emphatically, "we may come home sometime, so we'll keep everything right here."

Mrs. Ashby gasped. "An' I can't borry 'em now, to use whilst you're gone?"

Eliza's face looked determined. "No, for Aunt Morrow does not care to lend them," she answered politely.

"I'd never thought you'd be so supergrudgeous!" Mrs. Ashby spluttered angrily, taking her departure with a ludicrous dignity.

"Don't you worry over her one bit," Eliza laughed; "she'll be the first one to run in when we come home; but she'll not have time to trouble you much before we pack up and start for California."

"Californy!" gasped Mrs. Morrow, "why, Sam, my nephew, lives out there, he's young, an—" she stopped, and cast a glance of anticipation at Eliza's beaming face. "Mebbe I'm wicked," she murmured, "but I can't help a-sayin' thankful prayers fur a-stealin' you, Eliza."
